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'MID PLEASURES AND PALACES

MARY LANDON

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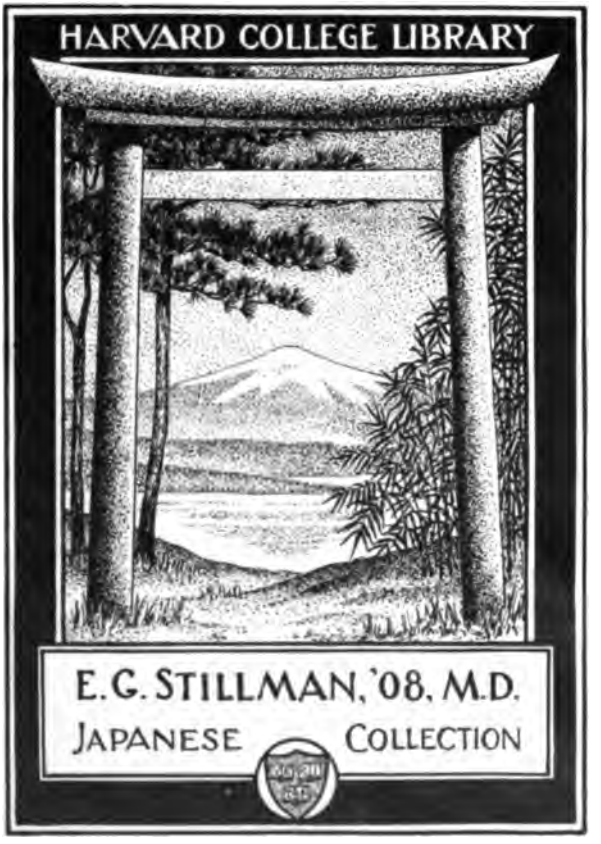

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WAT CHANG.

LONDON

ADELPHI TERRACE

MCMVII

'MID PLEASURES AND PALACES

BY

MARY LANDON

AUTHOR OF "HOW THE GARDEN GREW"

"A tourist show, a legend told!
A resting bulk of bronze and gold:
So much! yet scarce so much, ye hold
The meaning of Kamakura!"

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
ADELPHI TERRACE
MCMVII

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DEDICATED

TO

MY FELLOW-TRAVELLERS

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'MID PLEASURES AND PALACES

CHAPTER I

THE START

"THREE is a bad number, of course, but if you and Mother always join forces, I shall annex a young man! It leaves me free, doesn't it? That is one good thing."

So said the youngest of the three; but the mere lack of years and experience does not in these days militate against great wisdom. When Gyp talked of being left free, I tried to remember any time or occasion when an inconveniencing barrier had been more in her eyes than a hurdle to take. Since the day when, as a small child, she repudiated the name her god- fathers and mothers had given her, and, in memory of a favourite terrier, declared her name to be "Gyp," she had always taken herself in hand. She chose her dresses, her friends, and her instructors; and did any of these fail to suit her, she showed her wisdom by promptly changing them. The result was outwardly a tall, fine young woman with brown hair that inclined

to red, and very brown eyes that surveyed the world frankly and fearlessly, and a spirit which was equally frank and fearless, but found itself one of the most interesting points of study. This she freely acknowledged, but also promised to omit no other interesting study that came her way.

It requires much strength to sit still on occasions. Gyp's mother, Cousin Mary, was not made either of jelly or cast-iron, but she could sit still. When she proposed this journey to me she had many reasons, and I found Gyp was the centre to most. Then she pleaded guilty to a great and unsatisfied longing to see the East, and now that one son was married, one gone on a long cruise, and the other stationed at Singapore, Gyp grown up, and I myself bent on visiting a brother in far-away Siam, the finger of fate seemed to point to the propitious moment.

"Let us settle it quite definitely, Helen. Your coming has turned the scale, for you can manage Gyp."

I laughed. "Never! and I cannot understand why I ever try."

We were studying a map—relative positions get mixed in one's head—when Gyp entered and obliterated further vision by planting herself and her cigarette on my knee.

"Settled things yet, you two?—I made up my mind a week ago. Now, Mummie, be sure of yourself; you won't see that blessed baby for months and months. Ernest thinks you culpable in the extreme for losing one day of its extraordinary infancy! But I really wish to take you—it seems to me you have arrived at a critical point of life; you are on the verge of old age, but with care you may avoid it for another ten or fifteen years. Don't you think so, Helen? If she does her nice grey hair carefully, and wears becoming

black and white gowns, and refuses to become fossilised—why——"

"Oh, you babe and suckling!" I exclaimed. "Give me also the benefit of your words of wisdom."

"You think you don't require them, Helen—that is your mistake. But what you really need is pluck—you show it in your Bridge play—and you shirk experiences—why, you have never even married!"

"Really, Gyp," began her mother.

"Oh, I am not saying it is too late, Mummie, if that is what you are thinking, but it is high time"—Cousin Mary shook her head at me, she thinks any woman over thirty must be very sensitive on this point—"in fact, I hope we may fix that up for Helen on our travels, though I shan't let her get engaged on board—it doesn't count. But now I do want to say one thing: if we three start out together, we must make a most rigorous compact each one to mind her own business and go her own way. Can you manage it, Helen? I know Mother can't—but she must try."

"Oh, try yourself." I rose energetically and upset Gyp, who placidly stretched herself on the floor and blew smoke rings at me. "Look at the way you are beginning on us, your elders and betters!"

"Not betters—did you say betters?" misquoted Gyp. Then she rose to her full five foot nine inches. "I am younger—I am therefore nearer the source of the 'trailing clouds,' and all my remarks are made in pure kindness. Age is like all your religion grown old, it hardens itself up in dogmas, and makes for the stereotype in customs. If the young people did not kindly come to break up a few old prejudices and expose exploded ideas, what a ghastly valley of dead bones the world would be!"

"You will grow old, Gyp," said her mother, almost sadly.

"If I live I must, but I will avoid the consequences as long as I can. Now, my dears, that is as much wisdom as you can bear for one day. I am going to my Club, and you may go and book the berths in the biggest steamer you can find."

Which we did: and then we three started.

. . . . . .

If I cover the ground—or rather the sea—faster than did our big, clean German-Lloyd *Herzog*, and do not tarry at Suez or bake in the Red Sea, it is only that I may hurry on to Jim in Bangkok. We did indeed "get out" in Ceylon, that heavenly isle of spicy breezes, of gorgeous vegetation, where man, so far from being "vile," as the dear misguided old hymn hath it, is a splendid part of the warm living picture, his dusky skin and brilliant-coloured cloth harmonising with the setting, where we poor white folk look tame beyond compare. That first rickshaw ride by the "coral strands" of the blue, blue sea is not to be forgotten. The palms, the "Flame of the Forest" with burning spirals of bloom above its dark foliage, the clusters of red "Amherstia," the hedges of hibiscus, the brilliant group of cannas, the stately crotans, and the scent from the cinnamon trees—it was all the East, the glowing, gorgeous, palpitating East—the East that will "call." And then again we boarded another German-Lloyd, and over an oily brown Indian ocean we glided, glad of its monotony. Gyp reminded me more than once of the lesson we had to learn regarding our own business. Smoking on deck, playing Bridge with anyone who could play—and Gyp's standard was high as far as the play went—staying up till the small hours, and rising at the late, these things called for remonstrance from the old-fashioned ideas to which my

mind still clung, and, egged on by Cousin Mary's "It comes better from you," I would make some futile attempt.

"Now, Helen—am I asking you not to flirt with that fat German, or waste your time with your lean American? Do I object to Mother's wholesale absorption in that ponderously uninteresting divine? Then, my dear, play the game."

Penang was passed, a mere vision of glittering points of light reflected, so it seemed, from the overhanging dark blue canopy with its myriad stars throbbing down. And then we found ourselves amongst queer shipping, and brown huts half hidden with palms and bamboos, that edge the entrance to the wonderful harbour of Singapore.

A very bronzed and white-helmeted Nat welcomed his mother and sister with British calm. He might have seen them at breakfast that same morning.

"Good for you, Mother—I wondered if you really would come. The Kid has grown, hasn't she? quite the young lady." I foresaw that Nat would need educating. "Ah, there's Helen. Better stay here, Helen; Bangkok's a beastly hole, and Jim doesn't want you."

Then Pompey was bidden to collect our luggage and bring it along. "Don't fuss, Mother; it is much too hot ever to fuss over anything out here, and my man sees to everything."

Pompey had smiled at us; he was the first Chinaman I ever admired, but not the last. He was fat and sleek, and clad in immaculate and delightfully shaped white garments, and his benevolent smile had travelled half down the back of his shaven head, and seemed to twirl his queue with good-humour. I felt I understood Pompey, which was foolish of me, for no Occidental can follow the workings of a Chinaman's mind; it is a psychical

impossibility; we are not made "alle same one piecee."

Nat would not hear of Raffles Hotel for us; he had arranged everything; we were to go to a friend's house.

"Why, haven't you heard of the hospitality of the East, Mother?"

"But, Nat—think of three of us, and we don't know the lady, either," said Gyp.

"Bless the child! there isn't a lady! It is a thoroughly well-regulated bachelor establishment, quite near the barracks, so Smiles and I run it together. Some pious predecessor called the house St. Catherine, but she is the only female round I know of. Come along, you shall have it all your own ways, all of you. That's what women like!"

My mind had taken in so many impressions that it began to refuse to record any more. We drove through many streets, leaving the bay-like harbour with its queer and crowded shipping behind; we passed big white buildings and shops and little slummy streets, and all seemed very Europeanised; only the occasional tropical vegetation, the numerous yellow Chinese coolies, so different from the bronze statues of Ceylon, brought one back to the East.

In a big room-like verandah, with comfortable lounge chairs and endless cushions, the soft-footed Pompey brought us tea. We paused in life's hurry, and thanked the gods for terra-firma.

The charm of "St. Catherine" will always be a grateful memory. How comfortable the lone, lorn man can make himself in the East. It knocks the conceit terribly out of a female head—if any has ever been allowed to grow there!—to find how unnecessary her presence is to a well-regulated establishment. I put in the saving clause "in the East," for I feel convinced we must be useful somewhere. There were no women in the house,

and the wheels seemed to run smoothly. I was to know a little more of the servant question later, and that troubles could lurk even where Chinamen abound, and the respectful brown Malay answers your summons of "boy."

But, on the other side, where can women feel so deeply that the feminine flavour is appreciated, her presence welcomed, what Nat called the "swish of her skirts" greeted so warmly, as in this same masculine-managed East? She is not needed to order the dinner, or investigate back and hidden parts; the bills concern her not; even the flowers adorn the rooms to supreme masculine satisfaction without her aid, and she needs but to sit still and enjoy it all; ask and receive, clap her hands, and behold the bowing servitor; she has but to be smiling, sweet, sparkling, well dressed, adding the finishing touch of an animated flower to life's well-furnished table! And every woman knows how easy that rôle is when all harassing cares are eliminated.

That is one point of view, taught by Singapore, Nat, and our gracious host, Mr. Smiles.

In the early morning Pompey, who had been told off to render us personal service, woke me with tea and fruit, and while my attention was wholly taken up in admiring the beauty of a mangosteen whose white sections lay cunningly embedded in soft pink as of cotton wool, with an outer shell of green, a perfect scheme of colour, too good to eat, but also too good not to eat, Pompey suddenly disappeared through the floor. Arabian Nights dreams had been floating through my head, but was this disappearance due to magic, or—or—I raised the mosquito curtains to get a clearer view. A trap-door had been opened in the floor, and from the depths beneath Pompey's head was again reappearing.

"Missee bars leady jus-a-now." He pointed below. "Cold water—hot water." He collected my sponge, soap, and towels, and again disappeared.

When he came up I asked if the ladder were safe.

"Alle light. Tall missee very much sleepee. Missee tell other missee bars there. Drinkee tea flirst."

Which wise advice I followed, and let gentle afterthoughts lead me through that drowsy land which opens most attractively its shadowy gates when the call has gone forth to rise.

My trap-door led me into an original bathroom on the ground floor. It looked like a monastery cell with high whitewashed walls, and a door that led into the garden, and small window carefully curtained. The bath was a huge and beautifully formed vase of red earthenware, filled to the brim with cold water, and for one rash moment I thought it might be intended to step into; but an ordinary tin bath with hot water gave me a better idea, and a ladle suggested the cold-water douche system. Through the splashing I heard a call—

"Helen, Helen!"

I glanced at my open trap-door overhead.

"Oh, don't come in!"

"Helen, is that you?"

"I'm here—but——"

"Well, come to me—quick—at once——"

It was certainly Gyp's imperative call, and I did hurry.

Her room was next mine, and the same kind of trap-door greeted me.

"Come, come! I am being frozen—I can't get out—it is so slippery, and the chair has slid itself away—and oh, hurry up!"

Gyp had got into her vase! It had not been as easy as it looked even with the help of the chair, and she could not get out, for it was out of reach.

The water was very cold, and Gyp was furious with everything and everybody, especially me. And of course I laughed; but I had another good dousing before I rescued her. She was not the least careful of my nice white dressing-gown!

"You silly child, what made you get in?"

"Oh, don't talk—rub, go on rubbing. The water was icy, and you wouldn't hear—you were singing, absolutely singing silly songs while I—talk of Nero indeed! Of course I got in—look at the shape of it! and the delicious greenish water in that pink thing—why, anyone capable of an artistic inspiration would wish to get in. Of course I got in. Didn't it make a perfect picture? Oh, don't stop—don't stop to talk; rub, rub, I am beginning to circulate."

My arms were aching and my slippers soaking.

"Gyp! you really *are*! I had no time to admire your picture. I thought you were being killed. Now I have done; you have exhausted me for the day; you have ruined my spotless gown; and you have given me a cold in my toes!"

"Toes don't matter, it is nose that plays the mischief with one's looks, and that is what I am afraid of. It always strikes me, Helen, you think an awful lot of yourself!"

"You little black kettle!" I shouted from the top of the ladder, and I vanished before Gyp's response could reach me.

After a bit Gyp's head—still unfinished—peeped in at my door. "Helen dear, don't say a word about my tub at breakfast, will you? Please don't!" The voice was gentle and persuasive.

"Of course not, I should not dream of such a thing," was my soothing answer.

Downstairs, in the deep, cool white porch, that stretched itself into a verandah, was laid the breakfast table, and Cousin Mary, Nat, and our host,

in delightful white suits; were waiting in peaceful patience and easy-chairs.

"Here is one of them!" cried Nat. "Gyp getting up?"

"Oh yes. I am sorry to be late. Oh, how lovely it is!"

And so it was. The radiant day, the sloping greenness of the well-cared-for lawn, tall trees shutting out the neighbouring houses that were not near enough to overlook, the effective groups of cannas and crotans, and the tufted palms I loved so well. All these filled the eyes and the soul with a sense of supreme satisfaction.

"You like it?" said our host. "It isn't bad, but you must get up earlier to-morrow and ride or drive before it gets too hot. Now, Nat, didn't you say you wanted to introduce Miss Carteret to the 'Durian'? Miss Carteret, have you ever tasted durian?"

I had only heard of this fruit of the East; did not A. R. Wallace declare it to be the "king of fruits"?

"Oh! all right," said Nat. "Here, Pompey, bring back the durian."

Cousin Mary had leant forward with a half-ejaculation, and then checked herself. Nat laughed.

"I believe Mother would like to live and die on oranges and apples. Now, Helen, did you have a mangosteen this morning, eh? Wasn't it good?"

"Delicious—and so good to look at."

"There, you see, Mother. Helen has an open mind!"

Pompey placed a large, unattractive pumpkin-shaped object on the table, and as Nat and I walked towards it, it came forth to greet us. I can describe it quite easily. I never got beyond a bowing acquaintance, and then I turned and fled.

It was exactly like a very bad whiff from a drain.

"Oh," I cried, at a little distance, "but it is bad."

"No, not at all. It is a little early for them; you will get plenty later on in Bangkok. But try it; it's all right."

And Nat, in cousinly fashion, caught my arm. "Come on—don't be a coward. You must eat some, or pretend to, and so make Gyp. Mother behaved disgracefully; we had to send it away."

"It is the nearest thing to typhoid I have ever met. Nat, I won't go a step nearer. What does it taste like?"

"Smiles, you are a connoisseur; describe it."

Mr. Smiles' good-tempered broad face was beaming. With a pig-tail he might have been somewhat like Pompey.

"It's awfully good when you get over the first impression. 'Pon my soul it is. Like caviare, oysters, and all those extra good things, you've got to grow to it. Well, it has a combination of tastes—pineapple and soap and strawberries and cream and mangoes and turpentine and honey—everything good you can think of. Really it has. Try it."

"But where does the drain come in?" I asked anxiously, whereat they roared, and said I was rude, and not ready yet to enjoy the delicacies of the East.

"Ah," said Cousin Mary triumphantly, "I told you so! and you won't get Gyp near it."

"Not with you and Helen making wry faces. Take her away, Mother, and show her the orchids, and we will manage Gyp."

It was a sight to reconcile one even to durians. The broad drive was shaded by trees, and on their strong trunks grew the pigeon-orchids. That morning they had burst into flower, and masses of delicate white bloom carried the eye right down the avenue.

"To-morrow they will all be gone, Mr. Smiles says—they bloom for one day, and then rest for a fortnight."

"Oh, how glad I am it is to-day!" I sighed, "for, Cousin Mary, I must go on, you know. I heard from Jim this morning, and he expects me the end of this week. To-day is Tuesday, and the boat goes Wednesday, he thinks."

"You can't go so soon. Helen, I wish you would stay. Gyp is so good with you, and I want to talk to you about so many things. Besides, you must see Singapore."

"Now, Cousin Mary! you know I have come to see Jim! And you have Nat, not to mention our smiling host, and you are coming on when you are tired of being here."

We heard Gyp's voice in the distance, and then much laughter, peals of it, so we turned towards the house.

"Oh, you two!" cried Gyp. "Funks, both of you! Durian is perfectly delicious. And, Helen! you must forgive me, but it was too good a story to be lost. I have just told them how I helped you out of that lovely pink vase this morning. You would have been there still had I not heard your piteous wails. It was a pretty picture, though," she added calmly. "Quite an Alma Tadema. I wish I had run up for that infernal machine of yours and taken a snapshot."

"Gyp! you—oh, you little snake in the grass! Why——"

"Now don't, dear Helen, don't. I have really described you nicely. A *tu quoque* is *so* weak. No one believes it."

I don't suppose anyone did but Cousin Mary. And really, for the moment, I felt glad I was leaving Gyp in Singapore.

CHAPTER II

ON THE WAY TO BANGKOK

THE next day was rain. It did not pour down or apparently come from anywhere; it was just a warm, murky atmosphere of water, a vapour bath where the steam resolved itself into drops. An expedition to Johore, across the narrow strip of channel to see the palace on the mainland, was out of the question, and the day after, in spite of everybody's kind entreaties, I ordered myself and my trunks on board the most unpromising little steamer, that said it was bound for Bangkok.

"If you will only wait a week or ten days, you can go up in pomp and luxury on the *Simla*," said Mr. Smiles. "It is a beautifully fitted-up boat, and left just before you got in. It never runs to time in meeting the German-Lloyd, though it is supposed to, but it is particular to bring any passengers down just to catch them. Of course it belongs to the German-Lloyd. This line was bought up by them; it used to be Scotch."

"Don't tell my Mother those things, Mr. Smiles," said Gyp, "they make her ill. She goes round singing 'Rule Britannia' till I am tired. It was Helen made her come out in the German-Lloyd, because Helen's principles are nowhere when it comes to a deck cabin. I have no principles, so I never sacrifice them. I believe it is the secret of perpetual youth. I am going to try it."

"Well, then, Miss Carteret, your principles cannot be strong enough to make you risk a voyage on the *Nam-Po*. It is—really, you know, it's not good enough for ladies."

Gyp answered for me.

"That's where you can't rely on Helen's principles; she will probably enjoy making a martyr of herself, and say it's all for Jim! *I* have reasoned with Helen, but her boxes are packed, so say 'Good-bye.'"

Nat said he had booked the best cabin for me, though, of course, the instant a lady appeared on board, the captain rushed to give her up his room; and, after all, though not luxurious, the *Nam-Po* was safe enough, and not so likely to "turn turtle" as the showy *Simla*.

Nat was nice and comforting, and he saw me on board late at night, for we were to sail in the early morning. I would not allow Cousin Mary to come those two choppy miles of water with me. The *Nam-Po* lay far out in the bay, and when Nat had left me, I did feel very low and desolate. I was soon to feel much worse.

The captain was German,—of course he could not help that,—and he made no rush to offer me his cabin, a very nice roomy one on deck; but I did not expect it, nor even wish it. I looked at the stars, and the lights of Singapore, and the crowded shipping with the red, green, and white lights around me. I told myself it was only for four days, and then Jim would be there—four days! they were nothing. But I wished the dirty black boat—they had been coaling, of course—would keep steady *in* harbour; outside one must not expect too much. There were monsoons roaming round, I knew; if they did not blow from the south-west, they came from the north-east. However, one might have luck.

Out of the faintly lit darkness a figure approached me, and an unmistakable accent began—

"Wall—I guess we're fellow-passengers. Just been fixing my cabin! Good thing for me I had gotten on board before you did, for so I have secured the best and most airy cabin, which is what I wanted. I'm a very poor sailor, and the best can't be called good on this dirty little boat. The food likewise is purty tough. I always lay in a supply of canned goods, crackers, and such like. Doubtless you have done the same. Aire you travelling alone?"

This lengthy speech, drawled out with a familiar manner, came from an individual who jarred every sense I possessed. He was middle-aged, black hair and moustache, rather stout, and as unlike the spare, strenuous type we know as "Uncle Sam" as a nigger. I suppose the thought of that "secured" cabin, which ought to have been mine, had something to do with my feelings, but I disliked him heartily; so I merely answered that I had not thought of laying in provisions. I wished I had.

"So you aire going to Bangkok? Friends there, of course. What name, may I ask? Oh! Carteret—yes, to be sure, I noted it on your saratogas. Your brother? Why, I know him quite well. Jim Carteret? that's so. Doing very well, Jim is; good head on his shoulders. Bin in the States he has, too; that sharpens up a man, I guess. Wall, marm, vurry glad to make your acquaintance. Good-night to you. I am going to get all the sleep I can before we start rolling seriously."

Feeling more disheartened than before, I went down the slippery little ladder and sought my cabin, trying to shut my eyes to its general grubbiness, and vowing I would have it scrubbed out next morning.

In spite of seeing several cockroaches and processions of tiny red ants on the walls, I did eventually

turn out the smelly little oil lamp and fall into a troubled sleep.

A knock at my door, a waking consciousness that we were not yet moving, and looking round the little curtain I saw a grinning Chinese coolie, in blue over-alls and pig-tail screwed round in a knot at the back of his head, standing within two feet of me. My whole cabin was the size of a small hearth-rug.

"Mees-mam getting up bleakfast? Bleakfast he leady jus-a-now."

"Send me the stewardess," I said severely.

The grin broadened.

"No stewardess, mees-mam. My blinging mees-mam bleakfast—hot water—evelyting!"

"No stewardess! Where is the—is there a bathroom?"

"Bars-loom, yes, yes. Bars-loom alle light; not velly clean. Bars-loom clean to-mollow. Blinging mees-mam hot water jus-a-now."

When my blue-robed friend reappeared it was with a tiny cracked jug. I waved graphic hands over the cabin, and explained I wanted it scrubbed, cleaned, every portion of it.

He grinned—I appeared to be a source of amusement to him.

"Alle light. My sclubbing—velly nice, velly good. My number one good butler-boy."

But indeed he was not. His actions fell very far behind his words. However, he had his hands full, as he and the cook were the sole domestics. They only managed not to be overworked by avoiding most of their duties. There is occasionally a simple directness about the actions of this most complicated people that is at times enjoyable, and a pleasant liar has his good points.

An appalling breakfast of everything nasty sent me hurrying on deck. I had been too shy to break the ominous silence that fell more profoundly on the

small company when I entered the dark and dirty saloon. The first mate—first, second, and third, he was all there was—growled a German answer to my "Good-morning"; a very dark and repellent Singhalee took no notice of my bow; and two thin, pale youths, nationality unknown, refused to raise their eyes from their plates. My American acquaintance was not there.

"I am going to have a lovely four days," I said to myself. "How fearsome a thing it is to be the only representative of one's sex! Now to find the captain, and ask why we have not started."

The sea and sky were blue but stormy, and I looked towards Singapore with weak longing.

German captains can be nice; I found one once who was; but this man was the rule, not the exception. A German word expresses him satisfactorily, he was "Grob." There is no need to offer a translation, anyone can feel the meaning without a dictionary.

He was standing outside his cabin, a quite spacious apartment on deck, but I really do not think I wanted that cabin or had it against him that he did not offer it me; my wrath on that score was entirely given to the American; but the captain might have been civil, especially as I addressed him in English, and did not air my German. He answered my inquiries with "Scharting? I dunno. The dam crew have all deschert. Zey go mit de coal coolies last night in ze dark. Verfluchte-schwein-damner-donner-growl-growl-blitze!" He withdrew a fat cigar, spat, and glared at Singapore.

"How very annoying," I said sympathetically. "But if we can't start to-day, I think I would like to go on shore." My soul and body hungered for that deep, cool, clean verandah, and Cousin Mary.

"You can go, but I don't vait for you to kom back. I go now, and shall find some more devils;

sere are plenty sere," he jerked at the shore. "It's more monney sey would 'ave. I schart at von—take it or leave it—Gott dam! I am not a passenger-boat; I prevaire cattle to vomen."

"So I should judge," I said tartly, "but it suits me to go, so I shall." And I walked away feeling anything but "good."

We did not start at one o'clock, and it was not till seven that the captain reappeared with his crew. Had I not been on board with my teeth set to go through with it, the sight of that crew would have driven me to Cousin Mary's arms. Those suggestive words, "Parthians and Medes and Elamites," flashed into my mind, and every species of outer Barbarians were surely among them, for they came from every strange and weird nationality that is to be found at that central port, where the scum of the East drift and circulate. Fourteen of them! the dirtiest, ugliest, raggedest ruffians that were ever collected together. As a pirate crew for a comic opera they would have made a roaring success, but as reliable seamen, to navigate a frail, unloaded boat into the teeth of a monsoon, from such, Heaven preserve us! And with this choice collection, and no cargo, we started in the dark and stormy evening out into the dark and the storm.

One ray of consolation there was. With the captain came two other passengers: one a bright, merry, brown boy, a Siamese, in the latest of English-cut clothes, and with an English boy's cheery voice and slang—it sounded homelike—and also a tall Englishman with dark eyes, whitening hair and moustache, and skin browned by years of Eastern sun. Bless that Englishman and that brown boy—they helped me through.

The captain was consoling at the uncomfortable dinner. "We shall r-r-roll outschide,"—his r's

anticipated the motion,—"catch ze monsoon from ze sous-west. You a good sailor, mees ?"

"Rather a poor one, I fear."

We were eating—at least I was pretending to—the most unclean food; a well-brought-up Hebrew would have turned from it with every Levitical law to support him. Our Chinese chef—a wicked oily coolie—had done the catering, and had evidently bought, or picked up, some discarded carcass, which he hashed, stewed, curried, and disguised under the names of honest-going meats. There was canned soup of unrivalled nastiness, and a little canned fruit that soon gave out. With the thought of the monsoon outside I did not think I should be very hungry, and I had some Ceylon tea if the "butler-boy" could be trusted to provide boiling water. But the outlook was not cheering.

The Englishman caught my distressed eye.

"Now it won't do to dishearten that young lady too badly, captain; you know one needs a good appetite to tackle Ah-Pong's fare. It's worse than ever this journey." He bent over the narrow table and said in paternal fashion, "Take some rice if you can't manage the curry. And you will like to know that after we pass the Point Cambodia, in two days' time, the south-west monsoon has no effect on us, we get into smooth waters."

"No, you don't alvays. You get ze wind from ze nors-east. I know. You make sis voyage not so often as I, Mistaire Halford."

The captain glared at me as though to say, "Oh! you shall catch it, if I can manage it."

"You have a nice airy cabin, anyway, but you must not stay downstairs, you know; be on deck, monsoon or no monsoon," said my new friend cheeringly.

"My cabin can't be described like that," I began; and then the American, who had been finding out all about the Siamese boy, broke in—

"Ah, no—number one has fallen to my share—got on board just half an hour before the lady, just in the nick of time! Ha! ha!"

Mr. Halford answered the joyful announcement with a look that ought to have annihilated, had looks the power; and from an atmosphere of tension I soon made my escape.

That was the only meal I attempted below. I resolved to have nothing more to do with dinners, but I wished I had had the forethought of the American.

The deck was illuminated by one lamp with a bright reflector behind it. To get out of its glare was so important that one sacrificed the chance of reading. I pulled my long chair to one side, and caught the rising wind fully, and while struggling with it, the Englishman came and took me in hand, and a great shadow of worry fell from me.

The next two days were bad: the monsoon lived up to its character, and the ship responded to billows and blasts; but with dogged determination, part of the Scotch character built into her in that far-away land, she ploughed her way on and made for her goal, the broad shining Menam River, and the "Venice of the East," the weird Bangkok, some twenty miles up her curving bosom.

Thanks to Mr. Halford, I struggled daily on deck and lay on my long chair, tucked round by my rug, holding on to myself by every process I knew. I could not stay in my cabin. I would not have gone there at night had there been any alternative. The Chinese "sclubbing" had made but little difference. Small armies of ants treated my bed as a playground and my person as a "bunker"; also, I regret to say, they found me

edible. Occasionally a rat scurried through, but I suppressed the proverbial scream—he was mercifully seeking more satisfactory quarters—and cockroaches raised their evil black horns at me from unexpected places. I had but one tumbler; it was no use capturing them. I dared not, I simply dared not, raise the mattress to see what might lurk beneath. I *had* to sleep on it, but with fear and trembling I looked beneath the pillow. Warnings in plenty occurred to me, specially the tragic story of the lady travelling on some small Eastern line who in the hot night turned her pillow for the sake of coolness, and beheld a mass of creeping, crawling brown cockroaches comfortably settled there. She promptly went raving mad, and was found singing to her pillow in the morning. So with the unbearable thought of their possibly sharing my pillow, I did peep beneath the hard little lump, and then placed my own comforting cushion on top. But the nights were long, the days were drear, though they passed. Mr. Halford captured what fruit he could and retained it for me, but the American had tried to be beforehand with him. My friend visited him in his cabin, and I judge spoke with quite brutal frankness; he also took from him the last pomolo that was found on board. Pomolos are a cross between oranges and lemons and the size of small melons; they are most grateful and comforting, and a section helps one to hold on.

The night before the Cambodian point was passed held a most desolate half-hour. It was dinner time, and everyone was down below. On deck the lamp had blown out, and into a sky of inky blackness, on a swelling and tossing sea, the small *Nam-Po* pitched forwards. The wind whistled shrilly and then sounded a stormier note, threatening, angry, as though deprived of some escaping victim.

The answer was creaks and groans and bangings from all parts of the vessel, and one grand crash from below, all the glass and crockery on board apparently joining in the storm. An order from the mate's guttural voice sounded like a howl of the damned as the wind tore it past me from the bridge. The vision of that pirate crew rose before me, fit devils to answer the shout and to dash and yell and wrestle with the fury that surrounded them. And through "the noise of the water-spouts," the "waves and the billows," the depths, the "depths of the sea," the clamouring, raging sea, we rushed into the black darkness of the night full of storm.

I am not of those who love to go down to the sea in great or small ships, and the wonders of the works of the Lord appeal to me most strongly in the beauty of tree and flower, or the silent deep of the starlit night; but for the Valkyrie soul this "riding of the storm," this "noise of many waters," must have its fascination. I, in my loneliness, had arrived at that shameful depth, fear; and even as I recognised it I bade it begone, summoning to my craven spirit the Psalmist's triumphant thought. Mr. Halford in flapping coat was blown to me across the deck, and a voice that rang reassuringly called—

"Are you here? Aren't we catching it! Are you getting wet?—but you *are*, and shivering too. This won't do. No dinner? and—and frightened?"

"No—at least I think I was. But I won't go down, I can't. I *am* afraid of these cockroaches."

"It's not as bad as it seems, and the captain knows his business. I am going to fetch you my rug and some hot soup—never mind if it is nasty—and then you will enjoy this little blow." When he returned bearing a cup with difficulty he said,

"You will be sorry to hear your American friend, Mr. Alexander B. Binks, is not at all happy."

"Have you been doing Good Samaritan to him too?" My voice was still a trifle shaky, but the "oil and wine" of his sympathy and soup were restoring me.

"I should let him drown just where he is, if there were any chance of his drowning, which there isn't. You will probably make quite friends with him during your stay in Bangkok. He is an old resident."

"I shan't trouble to know him. But are you not a resident?"

"I shall be there just twenty-four hours. It is my fourth hurried visit, a business matter, to do with a patent. It must be settled, even though it involves one of these Siamese princes making up their minds 'right there,' as our friend would say, a thing a Siamese, specially a prince, can't do."

"But if he does not make up his mind?"

"I shall do it for him; and if he unmakes it, I shall be gone, and he will bow to the inevitable. It is really a German with whom I have to deal, but the head of the department, as always, is a prince, so he has to pretend to have his say. He doesn't really understand; not through stupidity—they are not stupid, these Siamese—but they suffer from sheer slackness. That is why they must go under. Germany is there——"

"Germany does not want them," I said, wise from reading Siam up to date.

"No, not their country, only their trade. These are German boats now, more fools we! But France has fancies, and there is always—Us! We don't want the place if no one else has it. I think we would bolster them up and keep them going from a love of the picturesque, and the 'open door,'—but—you know all this. I notice your literature,

which you have been unable to read so far!" Then he laughed. "All these fellows go there for a bit and write a book. You are the first person I have seen reading one. Do they take in England, these works on Bangkok? Half the people don't know where it is, now do they?"

"Those who *know* always say, 'Oh yes, Burmah!' and those who don't, smile vaguely. I am going to feel so superior."

"You will remember the journey there, won't you? and you will remember the American——"

"*And* the Good Samaritan," I added.

In the night we passed behind the sheltering point of Cambodia, and the angry monsoon ceased from troubling, and the waves sank to rest. The blackness into which we had hurried was but the curtain in front of the calm.

In the morning I ran quickly up a steady stair into the light and brightness of glorious warm sunshine, and as I ordered my tea and toast from Ah-Pong, I asked also for some fruit.

"Flute! no can do. Flute he all eat up. My blinging mees-mam befsteak—chop—cully, velly good cully. Amelican gentleman he eating cully jus-a-now—mees-mam likee?"

"No—no!"—though the sun was shining, the cook was the same,—"just bring me toast—plenty toast," and I thought to myself what a good breakfast I would have with Jim in two days' time.

The Good Samaritan greeted me almost sadly with, "Ah! you don't want me any more!"

Mr. Alexander B. Binks appeared on board, and drawing a chair close to mine, carefully explained to me the advantages he had enjoyed in having a cabin mid-ships with a port-hole to the front. I said I could believe it.

"Why, marm," he continued, "the other cabins get no air!"

"I know it."

"And what with the stinking lamps, the smell of the cooking through that abominable little passage off which they lie, and the noise they make raking out the cinders every few hours——"

"I have noticed it."

"Yes, that's so. On this ship the method is old-fashioned, and the cinders are raked up and thrown into the sea just outside——"

"Outside my cabin."

"That's so. I know your cabin. Had to take it once, and I said, 'Never again, Alexander, never again.' My wife—she's a most charming, cultivated woman is my wife—she always bids me look extra well after myself when she isn't along to look after me. That's a woman all over! Oh, I appreciate your sex, marm—no one more so, I assure you—and I have been vurry sorry to neglect this opportunity of having pleasant conversation with a lady whom I judge—and I rarely make mistakes—to be most intelligent, well read, and I may add of pleasing personality."

Mr. Halford, who was turning the leaves of my book on the chair next mine, jumped up here, banged down the book, and strode off. My face was wearing as broad a grin as Pompey's. The bad time was over, and really this gentleman was entertaining. I could afford to be amused.

"I have always heard how very courteous American men are to women. And I suppose there is no country in the world where the equality of the sexes is more thoroughly believed in."

"Guess not—guess not. We place our women vurry high. Judge a nation by the position occupied by the women, that's a sure test; and our women are beautiful, cultured, high-toned, independent, the salt of the earth, second to none!"

"How very nice; doubtless, as Mrs. Poyser

remarked, 'God A'mighty made 'em to match the men.'"

"I don't happen to know the lady; fiction, I conclude. Now my wife can talk fiction with anyone. As to the men of my country, I would not boast, marm, but look at the position America holds in the world—the leader, that's where she is, right there, and that's where her men have placed her. England's day is past."

"Poor little England! One learns so much travelling!"

"Ah, *you* will, marm, for I can see you go about with both eyes open."

"Yes, I must try to see all round. I have been growing so proud and uplifted; you know every place our steamer stopped at flew the British flag. There was Gibraltar, Suez, Aden, Ceylon—we left out India and Burmah, of course—Penang, Singapore, and I have been feeling—quite wrongly, I am sure—that we still did count for something, that we had not quite gone to the dogs. And now here I am on a German boat, that was British, and learning from an American of the coming power—I beg your pardon—come!"

"Wall, I guess that was England's strength, all these outlying points, but it may be her weakness. Now for America I don't hold with external expansion. Just bin round the Philippines, a two months' job. 'Give 'em up,' I say to America, 'give 'em up.'"

Mr. Halford had returned; he studied the American with keen eyes under his thick eyebrows.

"Give up the trade to Germany, eh, sir? Was there no business for you there?"

"Wall, sir, it would be Germany to take it if we did, not you Britishers."

"Come and look at your 'pirate crew' by sunlight, Miss Carteret." The Englishman started up.

"You ought to have a little walk, and the steerage are airing themselves over there. They will interest you."

But if he thought to get rid of Mr. Alexander B. Binks, he was disappointed. He came along too. He had an outpouring of information: Chinese, Siamese, Malays mostly composed the steerage passengers, and were pointed out by him and their peculiarities enlarged on, as they lay or squatted by their various bundles, lazily enjoying the sunshine.

At last Mr. Binks caught sight of the Siamese boy, and hurried off, telling me that he would bring him along presently, as he would appreciate my conversation, and I his.

"He has saved his life by going," said Mr. Halford grimly; "a little lurch, and the good gentleman would have been overboard."

"And you would have had to follow after to save him! Not worth while."

"But I should not. That sort ought to drown. And that's an American *gentleman*!" He glanced at the stout figure in a long black frock coat of most shiny cloth.

"Oh no," I said quickly. "Be just. I know American gentlemen."

In the afternoon peace reigned, and we slept on our long deck chairs. How blissful it was! the only untroubled sleep on the *Nam-Po*.

Then the nice brown boy with the English voice came and talked to me. So far our words had been few.

He was Nai Wongse—Nai stands for Mr.—and he had been in England for some eight years, the last five without a break, school and University, and was now a full-blown barrister of twenty-four. I had guessed him eighteen, whereat he laughed merrily. A round, ugly little face, but with a good

mouth and splendid teeth. His family belonged apparently to a very big one, who, in troublous times past, had been Regents, and nothing but their own sense of honour had prevented their aspiring to the throne itself. As I read a little of Siamese history, and learnt of the first king and the second king, I thought that after all my little friend's family may not have had the good chance he thought. We talked of many things, and at last touched on religion. He proclaimed himself Buddhist. "It does just as well as anything else, you know, and I know just as much about it as most of the fellows at Harrow knew about their Bible. There was a party of missionaries on board as far as Ceylon. One of them amused me, so I used to go into the second class and let her try to convert me; she was such an eager little thing, rather pretty too! She wanted to give me a Bible, but I told her I had had one for years. Why, I have argued with bishops! I know all about it, only I am going to stick to our religion. It's best out here, and I intend to live in my own country. There's a future before Siam!"

He looked so boyish, so bright, so keen; why, there must be a future before a country whose sons, absorbing Western energy, return to her with that hope and determination.

When Mr. Binks awoke and joined us he began warning my little Nai. He was rather small and square, though the Siamese man is not necessarily short.

"Now, my boy, you listen to me. I've seen you young fellahs come out fresh enough before, just all go and energy, and the first thing you begin to do is to chew betel-nut. Now that's a nasty, disgusting habit."

"Is it worse than chewing gum?" put in Mr. Halford, out of sheer cussedness.

"Yes, sir. It is. Tell you why. The betel-nut they chew is the leaf of the betel plant, wrapped round mashed-up areca nut mixed with red lime, rolled into a quid and placed in the mouth in unbecomingly large quantities. So it thickens the speech, turns the saliva blood-red, and expectoration becomes necessary and revolting, the lime causes the gums to recede, and eventually the teeth—though preserved by the nut—fall out. The effect on the brain is that of a gentle soporific; it undoubtedly gives the Siamese that gentle, meditative look. But they ain't meditating, they're sleeping!" He suddenly thundered, as though to awaken them, "Look at our young friend here, look at his teeth! There's a show for you! Look at his keen eye, his energy, the vitality of him! England's done so much for him, though I guess America would have done more. Now what do you think he will be in two or three years? Slack—that's the word, slack—married, oh yes; that's all right if 'twas to one wife, but they don't stop at that—the king has gotten hundreds! I don't interest myself much in the religion out here, but that one fact is enough for me; religions ought to stop that kind of thing. Then those fine teeth of his will be black and rnining, his mouth protruding, and all his energy and promise wiped out. Yes, my young friend, that's what I've seen nice bright boys like you turn out, and so I say, for God's sake—Buddhist or Christian God—look out!"

Nai Wongse leant back laughing, but there seemed to me no longer the happy ring in his laugh.

"He's drawn a lively picture for me, hasn't he? But that's the Past, and I belong to the new Siam, the Siam that is introducing Western ideas, Western methods."

"Veneer—it's all veneer; and there's your Past in your bones and in the air you breathe. My! what air it is too, full of slackness; all I can do to keep at it myself, and I've gotten the energy and grit of my country in my veins."

"Oh! we don't mind our climate—that's where we have the pull. You white people knock up here and then go home. We stay."

I was so anxious to see a way out for my nice brown boy that I eagerly assented. "Of course you do, and it's your country, and you are not going to spoil those good teeth of yours, nor have more than one wife. Goodness, how anyone can *want* more!" I sighed so sincerely they all laughed, and Nai Wongse leant forward and said softly—

"He's an old croaker. Don't you believe him. I know what I intend to do."

The night was magnificent, with a brilliant moon making our path clear through a shimmering silver sea. And I, the one poor lone, lorn woman, had to retire to that unutterable cabin to be eaten up and scared to death and suffocated, while all those male monsters slept in the balmy air.

When the captain growled next morning that there would be no crossing the bar that day, we should lose the tide for sure, and so arrive in Bangkok only the following day, I vowed that nothing—no sense of decency, no broadest hints, no vision of pyjama'd figures creeping up the gangway and settling themselves for the night—should drive me down once again to that infernal little hole called my cabin. I did not say this very loud, I only said it to Mr. Halford, but he saw I meant it, and his anxiety to get over that "barra," as the captain called it, became as great as had been his wish to say "Good-night" to me the preceding evening.

The bar is a very real obstruction, and with all the water that the sea and Menam can manage between them no vessel of any draft can pass over and up the Menam. We waited anxiously for the answer to our signal from the lightship: "Twelve feet of water, and not high tide." So on we went, and crossed the bar without knowing it. Then we stopped at Paknam—pronounced by Mr. Binks Pāk-nām, and anyone who said otherwise was quickly corrected—and here the Custom officials came on board, Siamese officials right enough, but the words "Custom House" was printed on their caps in English. I pointed this out to Mr. Binks, and he said gravely it was wonderful this universal spread of the American language. Had I not noticed how the word "Store," for instance, was invading even my own country? The American tongue teemed with good, terse, vigorous phrases, bound to be adopted by a progressive world. "That's so, marm; you may note that right along your travels. Now I must quit talking to you for a few minutes; that little boat coming alongside contains Nai Wongse's family, and I particularly wish to witness the meeting between them. I believe it may be interesting."

There was but a small space on the lower deck, but Mr. Alexander B. Binks obtained a good position on the steps. The rest of us, less enterprising, and maybe realising that even Siamese family feeling held something sacred in it, stayed where we were; but when, later on, the family assembled on deck and sat in a circle round their newly recovered member, we were all frankly interested in each other. The father was broad and burly, somehow he did not suggest slackness; he wore the national costume, the panung, which is some yards of material—cloth, silk, or linen—folded round the waist, and the ends deftly twisted up from back and front between

the legs, so forming a kind of loose knickerbocker. This is worn by all classes, and by both men and women; for the latter it is not a becoming garment. The rest of his costume was Europeanised—a short white linen jacket, and shoes and stockings. The ladies of the party—and the brown boy had evidently his sisters and his cousins and his aunts as well as his mother there—wore the panung made of more or less ugly material, smart blouses with sleeves of a past fashion, very neatly and conventionally covered legs, and the hair of all of them—crowning touch of supreme ugliness!—cropped within an inch of the head, and standing on end in dark, stubbly monotony. And the brown boy, in the very latest things in checks, spats, straw hat, and high collar, sat in the circle, young Siam and old Siam. I felt with intense sympathy that he was nervous; that the ordeal for him was cruel; that, even as an English boy, had he dreaded this meeting in public, this sudden clash of his Western training with the old ideas, the old calls, of his home. He had knelt to his father, head to the very ground—so Mr. Binks described it, and, he believed, kissed his shoes; and now, with eyes all out of tune, he could take in his parents' blackened teeth, and the comical inelegance of his mother's brilliant rose-coloured sash and broad yellow ribbon worn crosswise over her white bodice.

Or was I sympathising where no sympathy was needed? Did these things, so strange and incongruous to me, but awake a good feeling of home memories and childhood's hours, even as the beautiful curves of the broad river with its fringe of various palms and bamboos, broken here and there by the native brown hut built on poles to the water's edge, must have stirred his love and pride of country? We do not see the grotesque when after years of absence we look in our mother's eyes or see again

"our own, our native land." And indeed this broad shining Menam, "Mother of Waters," was filling me with delight and interest. At the entrance we passed one well-known wat, or temple, of this much-betempled land, and its quaint curving roof, the beauty of its shingle tiles, green and gold, gave me my first taste for wats. It grew insatiable.

As we progressed towards Bangkok, the little brown huts on the water's edge grew more important, and brown house-boats lay alongside, and the traffic of boats increased and caused us to go warily with the sudden curves and windings of the river. Lighters, big white cargo boats, Chinese junks with their delightful sails of rushes, steamers, launches, and every description of little boats, specially the canoe-like sampan with its queer painted eye—a Chinese idea, "No can see, no can go"—then through a haze of black smoke driven from many a tall disfiguring chimney across the clear blue air, we saw Bangkok, a mêlée of brown huts, brown boats, brown people, Chinese stores and kings' palaces, shining pagodas and the deep shining roofs of temples glistening in the brilliancy of the strong, strong sun of the East.

At the most primitive landing-stage a big town ever possessed our steamer took nearly an hour to land us. And there was Jim, recognised at last amid a large group of white-clad, white-helmeted men, and we grew almost tired of spasmodic waves while still out of earshot.

So I quitted clinging to the railing, as Mr. Alexander Binks remarked, for he also wearied of waving to a feminine form in white—"She's gotten fleshy," he murmured, "but, bless her, she *is* a fine woman!"—and I collected all little baggage, tipped the grinning Ah-Pong, and tried to say nice things of gratitude to the Good Samaritan.

He was depressed, and would not hear them.

"That—that American friend of yours has been introducing himself to the old Siamese, who understands a very little English. Did you hear him? Oh, it was really amusing. 'Brought your boy safe home again, I have—bin giving him good advice all the time I could spare. Nice boy—I must keep my eye on him!' I am now waiting for him to present *you* to your brother, and assure him he has brought *you* safe up and looked after you."

We laughed at the idea, but as Jim at last bounded across the creaking planks and captured me and my bag, Mr. Binks was on the spot.

"Ah! Carteret—glad to see you. Brought your sister up safely—looked after her——"

"Oh, Mr. Binks! Who took the best cabin?" I almost shouted in order that Mr. Halford should hear.

"Why, certainly! But you have had a vurry interesting experience, and that is what you are seeking on your travels, I presume. First come first served is the rule on board or 'bus. Hope to see you again, marm, and continue our conversation on Siam. There's Mrs. Alexander Binks, to whom I shall present you later."

As we drove away behind two tearing little ponies, through crowded streets I was too excited to see, I suddenly realised all I needed—

"Oh, Jim, I am so hungry!"

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSEHOLD

WHEN, before leaving England, I looked down Mudie's list for works on Bangkok or Siam, I was astonished at the amount of literature to be read on the subject.

Beginning with Sir John Bowring's two volumes of most interesting matter published in 1848, and Mrs. Leonowen's amusing experiences as a governess to the present king fifty years ago, down to Siam in the twentieth century, much has been told an uninterested world of Siam's climate and trade, geographical position and political importance, her internal and external development, her king and her future. Oh! about her future the learned have apparently no doubt, and they state it in the plainest terms, which are studied in Siam perhaps more closely than in England. It matters more to Siam.

Jim belonged to a Company interested in rice and teak; the learned books will tell you that the rice-growing capacity of the country may be much developed, but as far as teak goes, the Government has been "advised" fully as to the value of "forest concessions," and the palmy days for making a pile rapidly out of teak are past.

Jim's Company was one of the oldest in Bangkok, and had therefore secured for their manager one of the old houses on the banks of the river; and when I saw to what fate, in the way of houses, some people

were condemned, I said a little daily grace for the big verandah overlooking the patch of green grass that ran down to the broad shining Menam. To live in the East, and specially in Bangkok, and not have a verandah as your principal room, is as bad as living in the country without a garden. You really need one on both sides of the house, for the breezes may come from over the wide stretch of flat paddy-land which surrounds the town, or up from the twenty-mile distant sea, and whichever way they come we gladly welcome them; not only for the movement of the hot damp air, that at certain times of the year lies wearily over the place, but for the clearance, or partial clearance, thus effected of one of Bangkok's plagues, the inexhaustible mosquito, who gets out of a draught as quickly as a German. Oh! but I could write a separate chapter on that mosquito, and not even then would anyone realise what a fiend he is until personal acquaintance has been made. He grows into the background of one's thoughts, he intrudes into every quiet corner; no opportunity escapes him, no device daunts him; he is the stinging accompaniment to one's actions by day and to one's dreams by night. I did not realise him all at once, and afterwards he became part of the inevitable.

I blessed then the broad long verandah where openness and light, and what air there was, kept the pest at its lowest. There a variety of cane chairs, light tables, groups of palms, ferns, and Eucharist lilies, gave a comfortable and cool invitation; a flight of wooden steps led down to the garden, and the simplest way of entrance for a visitor was to walk up and see if anyone was at home. The other alternative was to look round for the bell that did not exist, and then to clap hands and shout "Boy." There was a front door, of course, and if it happened to be shut one could hammer away there and shout

again; but the butler, the "boy," the house-boy, the cook, the sices, the mallee, and the coolies, or underlings, were in their own quarters at the back of the house, busy with themselves, and as patience waned, courage waxed, and after all the visitor would mount the stairs and announce himself.

Jim's room and the big drawing-room gave out on to the verandah, and I consoled myself that my room had no such outlet. In a land where windows must be for ever open, being unglazed, and where the light wooden shutters would not resist an infant's push, the art of burglaring is reduced to its most primitive principles—in fact, it should be beneath contempt to practise it. The Siamese ideas of meum and tuum are also primitive, I was told, and the ease with which goods thus acquired were disposed of at the "pawn shops"—great institutions but a short while since—enabled the needy to earn an easy living. Then was the palmy time for bargains, and quaint discoveries of your neighbour's spoons on other people's tables; but the Government stepped in, "pawn shops" came under some salutary "Act," and bargains and burglaries were at once reduced fifty per cent. All the same, they are by no means uncommon; and only those houses which, like our own, possessed a night policeman all to themselves, were generally immune. I waked without agitation on hearing our guardian's creaking boots—all officials are at once promoted into trousers and boots—tramping under my windows and up the verandah steps and down again. I knew I should not hear a soft, barefooted burglar, though I sometimes wondered if I would not have preferred him; that zealous watchman had no one to disturb but us, and he did his duty. Jim told me I must not let my mind run too largely on reforms, so I never wrestled with that watchman's boots. Jim said this after I had had a field-day

in the drawing-room. The drawing-room possessed capabilities, but, like the looks of a badly dressed woman, these were hid from the masculine eye. The Chinese house-boy had elected that the chairs and tables should all wear an offended air, much as if they were bidden to dance in stiff rows with the wrong partners, and Jim had concluded this arrangement was inevitable. But I, with a view to possible parties, *tête-à-têtes*, or Bridge, decided that the furniture should play General Post, and one morning confided my scheme to Jim's "boy."

This "boy," which word signifies in the East a personal attendant, was a man of forty, a Madrassee, and one of the best "boys" that ever master was blessed with. He took me under the shadow of his protection, and I can never be sufficiently grateful to him. He wore beautiful white draperies, falling in fine folds to his bare brown feet, and a white turban crowned his dark expressive face, out of which gazed deep brown eyes full of the silent wisdom born of numberless silent forefathers. When he raised a thin, sensitive brown hand to his forehead in respectful salaam, you honoured yourself.

He began each morning for me by bringing tea and fruits. I, shrouded in my mosquito curtains, then watched the daily procession. "Master's boy" having said, "Missee ready for bars?" he summoned two coolies, the under housemaids—men, I should say—and they, bearing large pails of water on long poles over their stooping yellow shoulders, followed him in solemn single file to my bathroom. This was at the far end of my long bedroom, and I could daily admire the Indian's autocratic bearing with this yellow scum! I am not going to speak disrespectfully of the Chinese: I entertain nothing but awe and admiration for the Chinamen who dress well; but the yellow slouching beast of burden with nothing on but a small pair of blue pants, and maybe

a battered straw hat or dilapidated bowler, his pig-tail curled round his head, or in a jaunty bobble behind, raises such heathenish feelings of caste in my would-be benevolent breast, that I grow out of patience with myself.

Having seen them empty the hot and cold pails in the big tub, "master's boy" dismisses his slaves with a grand sweeping movement of the arm: "Scum, begone!" though he says no word. English is the only language my household has in common, but the coolie does not share that.

So I naturally turned to "master's boy" to aid me in my designs on the drawing-room.

He collected coolies, and then we selected some charming Eastern rugs from the bedrooms, and the uninteresting specimens savouring of Maple's were removed from the drawing-room to take their place. The chairs, sofas, and piano, everything, was danced round, first here, then there, and of course the revelations of dust caused my housewifely soul to raise protesting hands. I sent for the house-boy, Kim Hee, an immaculate little Chinaman of, I thought, some seventeen years, and evidently much needing a mistress's eye. He was quite calm, and smiled serenely.

"Dust. Oh no! Coolie sweeping evely day. Missee sitting vellandah. Vellandah he better for missee."

Master's boy glared at Kim Hee.

"Missee sitting drorroom—no dust for missee."

"Alle light. Missee likee so?" he indicated the chairs and rugs. "Alle light. Now leaving."

His minions obeyed him and removed the dust pans and brushes, and I retired to the verandah to rest, feeling a little uncomfortable under Kim Hee's inscrutable superiority. But "No," I said to myself sternly, "he is a little whipper-snapper of a Chinese boy, who is neglecting his work shockingly,

and I am going to make him do it while I am here."

When he appeared before me shortly after and announced, "Go walk," I hardly knew if it were a command or a request. He went on, "Four o'clock come give tea, go walk!"

I weakly said, "Very well, come back by four o'clock," and in a few minutes I saw him transformed from a spotlessly white little person into a queer black figure all in shiny black oil-silk—it really is silk-oiled and is waterproof and much fancied by China men and women who use it for Tightum, Hightum being garments of extravagant loveliness, brocades and silks of daintiest hues. Down the garden path he marched serenely, nose in air, long tail behind, a sailor hat perched jauntily on his heightened forehead, and a dainty fan waving in his hand. An admiring friend, similarly clad, walked a little more bashfully behind. It is not given to every Chinaman to have attained Kim Hee's serenity so young.

I told Jim of my morning's work at tea-time; he had been out all day, having tiffin at his office and interviewing teak as far as I could learn. I had to point out my improvements: he pretended he saw no difference, except that I had put those expensive rugs in his bedroom!

"I hope Kim Hee will stick to us," he said meditatively. "I know a lot of people want him, and they may offer him the place of butler. I think he is waiting for a fellow who has a berth in the forest department to come back from his holiday. Then he will leave me; he is his 'boy' and devoted to him, but we might go on smoothly for a few months perhaps. The coolies have given warning, but I told them to go to blazes at once, so they will probably ask to be kept on to-morrow. Coolies don't count anyhow; they are the scum up from

Singapore, and Singapore gets the scum from the rest of the world; but Kim Hees are rare."

I was gasping.

"Do you mean to say, Jim, that they gave warning because I made them clean the room?"

"I don't know. You are an innovation, you see. They prefer a house without a 'mem' anyhow. But look here, you do exactly as you like; just go ahead and amuse yourself. I give the books and the whole show into your hands. I'm not going to worry, I hate it. I am going to take a rest. Keep the right side of the butler, but don't let him cheat you—if you can help it! And I will give you one piece of advice: leave the cook alone."

"Oh, but, Jim! I have heard such awful accounts! I simply *must* see for myself if——"

"If they are true? Well, don't! I know you expect to find the cook washing his feet in the soup tureen or straining the jelly through a sock, and he comfortingly assures you it 'no belong clean sock'! Oh! there are many such stories——"

"Don't, Jim—oh, don't! You can't seriously believe such things, or you could not eat your dinner."

"One must eat one's dinner, and one must have a Chinaman to cook it. At least they are the easiest to get. This man isn't half bad, and you will see how he can spread himself when it comes to giving a dinner-party. And, oh! Helen, I was forgetting: Mrs. Granville, that nice little woman you have not yet met, is going to send round a maid for you to see. She is her maid's sister or cousin or brother's wife or something, anyway there is just that amount of reference which is all you can hope for. She is Siamese, so now is your time to learn the language."

"But can't she speak English at all?"

"Not a blessed word." Jim smiled as serenely as a Chinaman.

"Can you, Jim?"

"My dear girl, I am much too busy, and I keep a man in the office to do it for me. If I tried their villainous mouthfuls of sound, it would drive what little other languages I have out of my head, and I don't intend to live and die in Siam. Never mind, teach her English; it will always be useful to her."

"I wonder if I want her——" I began thoughtfully.

"Oh yes, you do," said Jim sternly. "I can't let you annex my boy entirely. She will wash for you—of course you want her. Don't women's frocks do up at the back?"

"Yes, but you——"

"No, no—I am no use, never had any training. Why, you silly girl, why not have her?"

"Well, she may come. I can always turn her on to you and take your boy. He is ideal."

And so it was my little brown maid who forced me to some ineffectual wrestlings with the terrible tongue of the Siamese.

Jim brought me with triumph a book on the language, the only one printed, and I turned to it eagerly. It is a confusing book—I apologise to the author, but that is the truth, and not altogether his fault perhaps. However, I tried to grasp something, and this is one rule I specially noted: "In the pronunciation of all the letters there is a vocal sound of 'aw' following." The truth of that statement helped to fix it in my mind. "Aw, ong, ung, wong, tong, taw"—that might be a Siamese sentence! Then there are six different "tones" in which these same seductive sounds may be pronounced, and each variety of tone conveys an entirely different sense to the initiated ear. I shut up the book, wondering how quickly my little maid would learn English.

She came the next morning. I was seated at my dressing-table when I saw in the glass a little

brown face beside my own, and turning quickly, found a small slim figure dressed in the national panung of a very dowdy brown, and a plain, rather skimpy white cotton petticoat-bodice. Her hair was also dressed in the national manner, one inch of it standing straight on end; the rest of her was nice bare brown skin. Two expressive brown eyes examined me intently, and she smiled and showed her blackened teeth, which, young as she was, were already beginning to project, this being one of the consequences of the national habit. A strong smell of garlic accompanied her, due to the same disastrous cause, and I resolved to find "betel-nut" and "must not" in the red book as soon as I could. We both smiled, and I put finishing touches to my hair, to her great interest; and then having squatted on the floor, she found quite sufficient amusement in watching me dress.

A terrible feeling of responsibility enveloped me as I thought of my duties to her as her first mistress, but she looked intelligent; the Siamese woman does, and she is—the men have found that out—and she has all the rights to work that she cares to claim, being general manager of house or shop, conducting the sale of rice, often, Jim said, with horrible shrewdness and a wealth of invective; and she rows the sampan while her lord meditatively chews the betel-nut in the stern.

The butler was not so prejudiced a Chinee as Kim Hee; in fact, he always eyed me in kindly fashion, though his enigmatic smile made me wonder as to his real sentiments. He would bring me a slate in the morning on which he and the cook had composed the menu, and I altered as I felt inclined.

"Cook he going out jus-a-now. Missee ordling."

I crossed out some of the many puddings. "One enough," I said.

"Missee wantchee plenty meat?" he asked, with surprise.

"Oh no. Plenty giving. One lady duck," I read, and passed with a smile. "Yes, that will do—not beef then, but fish."

I began altering the items.

"Master velly angly not giving plenty. My telling cook beef and lady duck. Gentlemans coming dinner. Master saying, 'Butler, you plenty heap bad butler:'"

Jim had forgotten to tell me.

"Oh, if a gentleman is coming, beef by all means, and fish, and two puddings."

"My telling cook he catchee flish. Missee liking flish evely night."

"Yes, and next week I have big dinner-party. Cook making very fine big dinner."

"Velly well. Can do. Plenty flish, plenty cully and lice, one largee goose giving."

"Goose! What, in this hot climate? No, thank you."

Butler looked at me doubtfully—then hopefully.

"Missee liking much more better number one litlee pig."

I am sure I sank to lowest depths in the butler's estimation when my answer was one of dismay. I did not know then the real genuine affection that the entire nation has for the pig.

He only smiled down on me—poor ignorant superstitious female "foleign devil."

"Missee not mallied?" was his next remark. I guessed how much I needed masculine discipline in his eyes.

"No."

"Master he not mallied?"

"No, he is not married."

"Not having number one wife nowheres?"

"No—nowhere."

"How old master?"

"Master is thirty-four." I hoped the conversation was keeping to the line of Chinese decorum; the next question, however, startled me.

"How old missee?"

No—his look was one of placid inquiry—quite polite. So I answered—

"How old do you think?"

"Oh; missee velly good age: my thinking missee plenty old—missee seventy."

I laughed.

"You very clever butler! Now tell cook to buy those nice little flat fish we had the other night." The mighty Mother of Waters has some uncommonly good fish in her depths.

The butler nodded. "Can do," and vanished.

Jim told me he had paid me a great compliment in giving me seventy years; anything under would have been rude. The older the better in Chinese ideas. What a consoling country! How nice and meek it ought to make the young! How good it would be for Gyp!

Jim brought two men to dinner that night, and I soon learnt that "plenty beef" was quite a necessity. In fact, my poetical idea that one could live on a little fruit and a lime-squash was quickly dispelled. As Jim informed me, you need perpetual building up, and it can't be done on a smile and a flower.

A great many cards had been left on me, and mine and Jim's had been scattered like autumn leaves in every direction. We always began our evening drive with a few duty visits, but as everyone chooses the same hour for driving and calling, we never found each other at home; so for the first few weeks that was all I knew of my neighbours, with the exception of Mrs. Granville of the Consulate and Mrs. Dashwood, the latter a very bright

little woman whose husband was lent by the Indian Government to advise the King of Siam on the currency question, apparently a nice intricate matter.

The poor king is surrounded by "advisers," by the way, and if he accepts a piece of advice—I think that would be the polite way of putting it—from England on one point, he has to make things equal by allowing France to "advise" him on another, and then Germany wants to know why she is left out? On such matters of importance as the Army and Navy it has been agreed amongst these three most interested, or intruding, nations that one of lesser importance must be allowed to play there the "advising" rôle. Poor King Chulalongkorn! I wonder if his nursery governess of long ago has given him a partiality for England's guidance; we like to think so, I believe, but he cannot enjoy being a bone of contention, and long may he live unannexed though "advised." I suggested that whatever we may think, or France may say—Germany only wants contracts and trade, that's all!—the people who were busy doing the real annexation were the Chinese. They have practically all the work of Bangkok in their hands, barring the work of the waterways, which the Siamese still fulfil, and they also take to wife the sturdy, intelligent little Siamese women. Their children, the "Luk Chins," sons of Chinamen, may make a difference in the future, being of so enterprising a parentage, but this will not, I was assured, touch the question of government; the Chinese do not govern, or where should we be in Singapore? There remain always the Japs, and Siam begins to send her sons there for education. She is wise; what can we do but "veneer" the "brown boys"? We are too far apart; the East is as the other side of the moon to us, even if we learnt humbly, which is not a European attitude.

I remarked to Jim that I thought it strange none of the other women had made any attempt to meet me, but since they had called, should we assume the airs of royalties and issue our gracious commands to them for a dinner?

"All right," said Jim. "I think that is wisest. I believe these people will wake up to the fact that you are here just as you are packing up to go. They get in a groove, the women more so than the men, and there is no one to take the lead. Mrs. Granville is wrapt up in her babies, and Mrs. Dashwood—well, she says she prefers men——"

"So she told me, but she is quite nice to me. Now let us make out a list. You tell me the women you want to have and I will choose the men."

"Oh, you can't do that; they must go with their wives."

"What a stodgy party that would make! Besides, the men I want are unencumbered. There is that nice Perry boy who is teaching me Siamese, and the German minister and little Russian understudy. Can't we find a Frenchman? Have none called?"

"No, but there is a Norwegian, and the Japanese have returned your visit at last."

"Let us have them; I like a mixture."

"All right, but I would stick mostly to the English; I have never been inside the other people's houses. They all keep themselves to themselves here."

"How dull! I should like to break that down."

"You had better stay three years, then, instead of three months. You might even arrive at knowing some Siamese."

"Jim, there is such an *embarras d'hommes* that I shall be obliged to follow Mrs. Dashwood's example and have five to one woman! But it doesn't make a good party."

"No—don't. A bachelor party is all right, but not that. Look here: give each woman two men, and that will do perfectly; no one can expect more."

The next person to consult was the butler. He and the cook laid their heads together and determined to show me what a number one fine dinner was, and the suggested menu reached from the top of the slate to the bottom and round the other side. There was every variety of meat, and it ended up with goose.

"No, butler, *not* having," and I reduced the terrible list to entrées, mutton, and ducks.

I made suggestions for the ices, and the butler continued to smile serenely and say, "Alle light, can do." Delightful Chinaman!

Then a thought struck me: I would make this an opportunity for a visit to the kitchen. I had ordered a soufflé—had the cook a proper tin? Also the milk—in what did he boil it? I very gently suggested to the butler I should now accompany him and see to these little things. I felt but a temporary mistress, and Jim's warning hung in my ears, but I *was* going into that kitchen, and I was not going to let them prepare for my visit.

"Cook he no speakee English."

"No matter. I want to see if he has enough pots and pans."

"Missee no tlouble—velly good pots—cook he evely ting, makee fine number one dinner. Missee telling master giving many ticals." (A tical is the usual piece of money, and is valued at about one shilling.)

Oh, the wily butler! Missee might be good to stretch the purse strings! For the cook and butler between them had an allowance of so much per head to cater with.

"Cook writing down everything—my paying," I

said grandly. "Now go and tell the cook I am coming."

And when I got there, like Mother Hubbard, I found the cupboard was bare. There was nothing to see. I never was more disappointed. A very tall Chinaman stood by a tiny stove in a small outhouse, which contained a small wooden table, a chopper, and on the walls hung one or two saucepans. It was all quite neat and clean, and the cook, clad in the orthodox black shining garments, was awaiting the orders and his rickshaw to go to market.

We smiled courteously at one another.

"But what does he cook with?" I asked my interpreter.

The butler pointed to the frying-pan. "He velly good pot."

"But the soufflé? He must have other pans."

The cook pointed to an old mustard-tin, and nodded serenely. Master's boy, with a grave face, stood in the doorway. I felt he thought my conduct rash without his presence; he had not much opinion of the heathen Chinee, and did for himself in his own little compartment. They had all an entirely free hand out here in their own part of the compound.

"What is that used for?" I asked, pointing to a battered sardine-box pierced into holes.

"Any time wantchee blead clumbs, can makee alle same velly nice. Missee likee blead clumb pudding, can do."

Necessity had not led to many inventions in this *batteria de cuisine*, but one admired the adaptability of the yellow brain, and I looked with interest at the cook's long pointed fingers and long pointed nails, and thought they probably, in their turn, played many parts.

"And what does he boil the milk in?"

The butler sought for one of the two saucepans, and presented it.

"He velly good pot. Other pot he not velly good. Cook he using alle same one pot."

"It is not enough, butler. Tell the cook I am going to buy more, using one for milk only, never for anything but milk, and not washing klong water." I pointed to a pail. "What water that?"

"Oh no, not klong water. Klong water he velly bad dangelous cholera water!" The glib horror on the butler's face made me terribly doubtful as to his sincerity.

I bowed my adieux to the serene cook, and took the "boy" off to interview the mallee; he was now my interpreter.

The mallee was a most pathetic figure in loose white garments, and his usual attitude was one of piteously raised arms, as though beseeching the powers that be to deal gently with him. Master's boy, who for the moment interpreted those powers, had a very stern way with him; I fancied him saying, "Come, none of that nonsense; you are the mallee here, master pays you to grow flowers—where are those flowers? Scum of the earth, you eat the master's bread, and when the mem comes and asks for flowers, you offer her trees."

The two waving arms demonstrated to heaven and earth and the presence that trees would grow, but flowers would not—wait till the rains, perhaps then the seeds that the master had planted might shoot up; as it was, let the mem come and see for herself.

It was a piteous sight. Little sad rows of tiny plants struggling with adverse circumstances, drooping unhappy little heads with premature buds struggling to do their duty and live up to their duly labelled names—antirrhinum, mignonette, sweet-pea, sunflower, zinnias—oh dear! oh

dear! I shook my head at their hopelessness, and the mallee waved his arms again, and the boy scowled at him, and all the advice I could think of was, "Give them decent burial—poor unhappy little strangers!"

Jim said cheerfully, when I told him of the failure of his seeds—

"They did splendidly in Burmah. A friend of mine at Mandalay grew all the English flowers; he gave me those names. Fact is, the man's an ass."

"So your boy thinks. But I think klong water does not suit them. They are dying of cholera germs. But you know, Jim, there is one thing everybody has but you, and that is the lovely pink creeper."

"Oh! the Honolulu creeper? Why, that is *so* common."

"It is lovely, and I could make the table a perfect dream with it."

"Have it if you want it. Tell the mallee to go and get some."

"Can he buy any? Your boy says he can't."

"Buy! of course not. He goes and borrows from other gardeners, and when they want anything they borrow from him."

"I don't much like doing that."

"Oh, well, they all do it. But I ought to have a Siamese gardener. They won't fraternise with this Indian; he always comes off second best. Just you tell him to get some good flowers for your dinner-party; tell him I pay him to grow flowers. You must be quite stern, and don't give him money; he will only pocket it."

I went again round the garden to see what possibilities there were. It always satisfied me entirely until I wanted cut flowers; the verandah was kept perfectly supplied with cool varieties of green plants, lilies, and maidenhair.

It was not a large garden; one green square of curious tuft-like grass of poor quality lay at the back, and was given over to tennis or the less strenuous croquet. It was surrounded by mango trees whose green pod-like fruit was slowly developing, and Jim spoke of mango fool as of something worth waiting for. Padouk trees were there, and they stretched bare brown branches amid the greenery as though to say, "It is only February, and we will sleep at the proper time, however foolish other trees may be!" The padouk tree insists on this little winter of its own, and one avenue down which Jim and I used to drive almost made me chill with its wintry bareness. For the rest, the other trees made but a poor show of flowers: the cassia would hang out laburnum-like blossoms later, the golmohur show brilliant scarlet spirals, and big, red, tulip-like bloom would cover another tree. They said nothing but "wait" to my questioning eyes, and I whispered, "But don't you delay too long, or I may not be here to see your beauty. I go before the rains." One dark-leaved tree struggled with a variety of purplish flowers, and where the temple tree was to be found the heavy scent and wax-like bloom were scattered all around. Down by the klong—our own private little ditch, where the mallee played diligently with a pail—grew amongst graceful bamboo some shrubs that gave promise of a white lilac-like blossom, and one quite common shrub had a convolvulus-shaped flower that bloomed in the unsatisfactory manner of an evening primrose. There was a fine row of tube roses, but I could not bring them indoors; and cannas, but they were not in good bloom just then; also the red hibiscus; but I was trying to cure the mallee of picking off a head here and there and giving them to Kim Hee to stick in terrible little specimen glasses. Up the

verandah grew a sweet little blue flower with a wide-open-eyed, innocent look about it, and a small close-clinging leaf; it fell as one picked it, and only the wonderful patience of the boy had remade it in pattern on the table for our edification. I wanted something different, and the idea of plenty of the pink Honolulu creeper grew on me. The mallee was told to get it somehow, and as the butler assured me that the market "can do" some sort of flowers, I charged him to procure these also. It would have seemed simpler to go myself, but when I suggested this, Jim and everyone else shook their heads. "Oh no, you can't possibly go yourself," just as when I wished for a rickshaw as a means of getting about—my favourite one, too!—I was told, "You *can't*—it's impossible! No one but Chinese and pigs use the rickshaws. They are the broken-down refuse from Singapore, and even in Singapore the Europeans can't patronise them."

Something of the East is already creeping into my bones. I lie down flat when Jim says "Impossible," in a way that astonishes myself, but that he regards as quite natural. Probably it is only the heat, though I have a European store of coolness in my blood; the average temperature is 96.

The Siamese, like their neighbours the Burmese, are very fond of flowers, and though they cannot, like them, twist a flower in their forelock, having none, they often stick a temple flower, otherwise the champac, or a marigold, behind the ear as clerks do a pen, and the little boys wear a small wreath of tightly-plaited-together heads of the temple flowers round their top-knots. I must explain that before the little boys and girls of Siam reach years of discretion they do not adopt the national way of dressing the hair. The babies leave it to nature, and that helps to make them such attractive little objects: the little boys are

cropped with the exception of the top of the head, and the hair there is twisted into a knot round which a small ring of flowers is often worn; the little girls let their hair grow until the right age for having it cut to the orthodox and unbecoming stubble of an inch long.

With the boys the function of the "cutting of the top-knot" corresponds to "coming of age," and takes place when they are about thirteen years of age. It is, in the case of royalty or the rich, a very grand religious ceremony, lasting over some days; the girls are naturally of less importance.

These little wreaths of flowers can be bought, and likewise a bigger wreath of the same flower, made on the principle of our cowslip balls. It is hung over the arm and taken to be presented to the mild big Buddhas in the many wats.

In the afternoon of the eventful day of my first effort, master's boy brought me a tray full of these wreaths, little and big. My allowance of ticals had evidently been liberal, and even Jim, who clung to his boy's patterns in the way of table decoration, acknowledged that the table looked lovely, and the boy was much impressed, apparently. A quaint centrepiece of Siamese work inlaid with gold and silver on a black metal ground, made in the days when Siam did work curiously and beautifully, was overflowing with the pink creeper, on to a carpet of maidenhair, and the round garlands had been opened and festooned from one point to another, while the little top-knot wreaths encircled the small silver bowls holding almonds and sweets.

"Velly plitty; missee makee much more better master's boy," commented the butler. But there was rivalry between the boy and the butler.

"Master's boy helping," I reproved.

Yes, the top side of that table would do, but what of the underneath? While we feasted above I

knew from painful experience there would also be feasting below. A nice, dark, still place enclosed by the white cloth, and all the choice sensitive ankles of the guests helplessly at the mercy of the knowing, greedy, poisonous mosquito!

If any woman puts the finishing touch of open-worked stockings to her dainty evening shoes, her fate for that night will be deplorable; but for everyone the doom was sure: there is nothing mosquitoes like better than ankles.

Of course we had all been warned and forearmed with various lotions, unctions, oils; from experience I can state the Bangkok mosquito finds the extra flavour rather attractive than otherwise, and it never interferes with his enjoyment. High silk boots are the only things that puzzle him, and everyone is not armed with them; silk stockings he laughs at. A woman's evening attire of course gives him grand opportunities, but not the peaceful sense of airless dark enjoyment that is obtainable under a dining-room table. I had heard of strong Chinese incense as keeping him at bay; I had burnt joss sticks, but not to much avail.

The butler smiled serenely, though not very sympathetically, at my plaint. Mosquitoes share the Fee-Fo-Fum giant's liking for the blood of an "Englishmun," but when I spoke of a Chinese incense with a very strong-smelling savour, he said concisely, "Can do."

Oh, blessed Celestial!

Then Jim and I started for our evening drive.

This "Venice of the East" deserves the name owing to its many klongs. These klongs, or canals, formed the highways and byways of Bangkok in the not very far past. Now roads are being made everywhere, but still the klongs are needed, and flow down the centre or at the side of many roads as a useful means of traffic for the water-loving Siamese.

The big rice-boats with an entire family on board pass up and down the intricate interlacings when the tide is full, and the small sampan, with a pile of vegetables and fruit for market, skims along propelled by an industrious Siamese woman. These klongs are fed by the Menam, and consequently they are tidal and brackish. In the rainy season, when the Mother of Waters flows full and free, this is less the case, but in the scarce months before May, when the rains begin, the brackishness is in the ascendant, and cholera—which I then learnt multiplies its germs most satisfactorily in salt water—becomes very common.

The Siamese live and move and have their being as much in and on the water as possible. Their brown huts are on the edge supported by poles, their brown babies play in and out the livelong day; they drink it, they cook with it, and they take their daily tub in it, standing knee-deep and having a rub down and a douche with a tin pan. There are no statistics about the number of deaths amongst Siamese and Chinese, but many a modest funeral procession is to be met during these months.

The Europeans try to be prudent. They have huge reservoir tanks of rain water, and should these give out they have distilled water; but for baths and use in the house klong water has to be fetched. It is at everyone's door, most "compounds" having their own little klong. It is purified with alum, but still not to be trusted in any way other than outside application.

I think one day an artist will arise and discover Bangkok, and surely he will have pictures to give us not easily found elsewhere. The glittering pagodas and the deep gold and green slope of the double or treble roofs of the wats, their quaintly beautiful gateways opening on to the rank tropical vegetation of the enclosing garden, where a yellow-robed "Phra" gives a note of colour—these form

ready-made pictures. But perhaps even the "New Road," that terrible attempt at the "progrit" of the farang (foreigner), may tempt his brush; for here, in a background of little shops, Chinese joss-houses and modern buildings, the most curious specimens of humanity jolt and jostle.

The Chinaman pulls the rickety rickshaw, used mostly by his friends or one unwilling pig on his way to market. Chinamen in the scantiest of little blue pants, with every species of pail, kettle, cauldron, or pot balanced on long poles over their sloping bare yellow shoulders, and containing every possible article, from live fish to unutterable refuse, moon along in everyone's way; brown gharries overflowing with brown men and boys cheerfully encourage the almost dropping horse; young dandies in blue silk panung, white coat, and sun-helmets elbow old market-women in the same panung of less showy material and with a scarf wrapped insufficiently over their breasts; brown babies sprawl in the centre of the road, happy as ever, and quite content that their guardian angels, in any form, should snatch them up from under the horses' feet, while they grin with all their little white teeth and laughing brown eyes. Through them all rushes a black shrieking electric tram car, rightly called by the natives the "devil's carriage," and you can conceive there is movement in the New Road. Or, for a contrast, he will give us some rickety bridge that spans the full brown klong, where brown huts, brown boats, brown humanity are relieved by a dash of the brilliant green of some flowering water shrub, and the graceful bamboo, the areca-nut palm, and the banana shoot up into the bluest of blue skies. But of any picture that he may select, one will appeal to me most strongly. The sun has set, and on the outskirts of the town we pause with a long stretch

of klong leading the eye over flat haziness to the western mystery. The cool water bordered with dark clumps of foliage, the colour lost in the dim light, becomes a ruddy pathway as the afterglow begins to warm the heavens; it spreads and flames until the quaint irregularity of roofs, the pointed pagodas, and the central wat of Bangkok, raised on a mound till its yellow roof dominates the town, are all but faint ghosts in the haze, and the real wonderful world is one of colour above us, to which we are led by the glowing reflection on the erstwhile brown klong. The revelation fades as we gaze, the deep blue night-sky draws a calming mantle over the glorious agitation, a welcome breeze clears the air of ghosts, the brown klong carries home a little dark boat, a sparkle of fire-light shows a brown hut with its evening meal cooking *al fresco*, "Lord Roberts," the whaler, shakes a reminding head, and we clatter over the rickety bridge of uncertain planks, with a long last look to where the glory has been.

"That is worth coming East for, Jim—that alone, if that were all."

"My dear girl, can you believe it? but I would rather see a good old yellow fog down a grubby old London street than all those fireworks."

And then we went home by the Goose-Road, which was overhung with the bared boughs of the padouk trees and bordered with klongs full of those cackling birds, and I told Jim of my suppressing that item in the menu, and he laughed, "Oh, they always have them here; but if it is mutton day, I suppose you can manage without."

Mutton was only procurable twice a week, and it was not first-rate at any time.

"I certainly should manage without any day," I said calmly.

"Well, new ideas are a blessing! Personally, I

THE BROWN KLONG

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do get tired of goose and plum pudding. Are you giving us plum pudding?"

"Jim! I should think not indeed."

I found Sap, my little maid, patting and smoothing my white satin dress with evident approval, and she had placed a large collection of shoes and boots of all colours in the centre of the room. I shook my head at them, and she amused herself replacing them on a shelf. That was sufficient occupation while I did my hair. Had it not been for her real delight in my toilette, I should have saved myself the trouble of instructing her in the art of helping, but my duty as mistress weighed on me. I had to keep Sap both occupied and happy, and it took up a great deal of my time. She noiselessly slipped about my room on her bare brown feet, and brought me all the things I did not want. I had learnt such words as brown, white, stockings, shoes, but I was still apt to get them mixed. When you have no peg on which to hang a thing up in your memory, the difficulty of finding it is great, and to me there was no association between words and things in the Siamese language. So Sap gave me black shoes and brown stockings, and finally grasped the idea of all white with a merry laugh.

Then came the fastening of the gown, lacing up at the back! Buttons and hooks and eyes had been mastered, but lacing! and to feel fumbling going on at your back, and to be unable to look round, is the most helpless position. I stood it for ten minutes, and then looked with a back glass at the result. It can be imagined! and I, with a hurried glance at an advancing clock, tried nervously to disentangle the crooked and knotted muddle.

"Oh, Sap, Sap, what have you done!" Books were no avail. "Not good, not good," was all I could groan. And there was Jim whistling cheerily

the other side of the thin wall, while his treasure of a boy waited on him hand and foot.

"Nearly ready, Helen," he called; "must be down in five minutes."

"I can't be—I never shall be—I am going to bed! Sap can't lace me up, and I can't get out of the muddle she has made. Come to the rescue, Jim, if you wish to see me again this evening."

My tone was desperate.

"Hang it all!" shouted back Jim, "I'm not ready myself. Why on earth do women have such fool-dresses made?"

"Oh, don't ask conundrums. If you don't come I shall have a fit."

Jim always believes a woman can turn on a fit or a faint at a moment's notice, so he came hurriedly.

"It is exactly like lacing your own boots, Jim. Sap can't understand that, as she has no boots. Now go ahead."

Jim whistled, then snorted; a deep silence fell, and then—

"It's all very fine, but my boots are clear sailing, this begins with a network of knots. If it goes on much longer I shall have to change my collar. Look here, Nell, can't you wear a thing that fastens with buttons?"

"Not wear this dress, my best and prettiest? What nonsense, Jim. Oh, you poor thing! You look like a boiled lobster, and are streaming."

Then I sat down utterly exhausted, and laughed at Jim, and Sap was having the time of her life.

"Here, I'll send my boy. He has been married; I have no doubt his wife taught him some things! Boy, come and help the lady; her Siamese girl is no good."

No more fumblings, someone had trained him all right, and Sap's eager brown eyes followed his deft fingers with due attention. It had all been great

fun, but she meant to learn the intricacies of a farang's garments.

And meanwhile Jim said naughty words the other side of the wall as he wrestled with studs and stiff cuffs. We were both ready in time to receive our guests, however: six women and ten men placed round my beautiful table with the greatest care and forethought.

"You may give me the dear little Jap if you like," Jim had said, "you ought to, as he is the minister; but I must have Mrs. Dashwood to talk to on the other side. We will put boy Perry by Madame Crysanthème, for he would chatter on if you gave him a Dutch doll."

"He will go far," I said oracularly, "but as he has not yet arrived, I cannot have him myself. There's the nice fat German minister, is he of more importance than the Jap? England couldn't come; really, I need an A.D.C."

The Japanese minister was, however, the only real one in residence—every other nationality was represented at the time by an understudy—so I took them as much in ages as possible; the Siamese court plan being to honour them according to their length of residence. The Japanese came out top on all occasions.

She was a perfectly sweet little person dressed in her own delightful national clothes: a soft grey silk kimono, very prim and quaker-like, but the big sash, obi, that seemed to keep her and all the folds together, was a mass of gold embroidery on magnificent purple. A Japanese lady only allows herself to indulge in colours in her sash. Her words of English were few, but very pretty; she made deep bows and sat on the edge of a sofa, drawing her white-stockinged and sandalled feet well under her, and smiling equably on all alike. He was a short, thick-set man, who spoke English

well, laughed a great deal, made jokes I could not follow, but he quite added to the hilarity of the scene.

Baron von Gulden, the German understudy, filled his chief's part to perfection. He and I had already made friends as Bridge partners, and we were smoothing over our national differences with plain speaking. I told him all the perfidious things Germany was trying to do, and he responded with England's many deficiencies. We got on capitally. He affected the English colony, but the German residents keep themselves to themselves; the French do likewise, and I, in my first dinner-party, sought to break through the rule with a German, a Jap, and a Russian, but I never got any further; the *entente cordiales* were all in the future. Men in teak, and men in Government concerns, and their wives in best frocks, made up my party, and Mrs. Dashwood, in great form, helped Jim's end of the table.

The butler, the boy, and Kim Hee waited admirably, and the Chinese chef had indeed spread himself. Everything was going beautifully, and I forgot to be anxious.

"But it is hot—oh my!" said Baron von Gulden, whose English had attained the familiar stage.

The punkah was swinging lazily, it had not seemed particularly hot to me, and the men, most of them in cool white clothes, looked very refreshing.

"I beg your pardon, I did kick you," went on the Baron.

"No, you did not," I assured him.

"But yes—zare, is not zat your feets?"

"No."

And now everyone was laughing and interested.

"Meeses Wills," to his other neighbour, "but no, you come not so far. Ach, but it is hot sis somvon's feet."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, with sudden remembrance,

"butler, have you left that incense pot? No, don't touch it, Baron. I should think it was hot!"

Everybody's head was screwing round and under, and the imperturbable butler quickly brought to view the incense pot, and carried it off quite as though it were all in the regular course. His placidity restored mine.

"So," said the Baron, "but you zink we have zen cold feet in Bangkok, Miss Carteret; you find it not vorm enough?"

Everyone laughed, and jokes about hot-water bottles and the temperature were busy.

"And you none of you notice," I began coolly, "that you have been freed all this time from the devouring mosquito. How we ignore our mercies!"

The laugh was turned; they had been in peace and never noticed it, and now it was, "Boon, blessing, good idea," and "Here's to Miss Carteret and ze hot pot," shouted Baron von Gulden, rising with a full glass.

"Ah, no, Baron; you won't be forgiven so soon. My foot indeed! and Mrs. Wills, I think you were included in the insult."

"A nasty black pot like my little foot! I shan't speak to you again, Baron," little Mrs. Wills bristled up.

But the Baron was not cast down, he continued his joke. He had taken that hot pot for my foot, he had found it responsive; to all Mr. Himoto's jokes he had called the black pot's attention, and Miss Carteret smiled—how then could he tell? But it was hot! I thought my Japanese friend would never recover, and as to his little wife, once Jim had explained the mystery to her it kept her amused for the rest of dinner. Mr. Perry found her a most cheerful companion, but it was the hot pot, not his wit. Whenever she caught my eye she collapsed behind her fan in dear little bubbling shakes of laughter.

But we were still only half-way through dinner, and though my menu had but an entrée, a roast, and ducks, there had been an interlude of curry which had rather surprised me. Both my neighbours, however, never flagged in any respect. Mr. Himoto was telling me a Cambridge "good fun"—he had learnt our ways and his excellent English at that seat of learning—when my attention was riveted by Jim's amused face, and following his eyes, mine encountered the most appalling, really to my mind the most unseemly, spectacle.

The butler was offering Mrs. Dashwood the carcass of a whole goose! I do not like the silly bird even clothed in his white feathers, but there is something positively indecent when he comes before you cooked in undisguised crude nakedness. He was cut up and kept together, and Mrs. Dashwood helped herself as though the sight were nothing unusual. I grew hot and red with vexation and indignation, and Mr. Himoto was left laughing alone as I sternly eyed the butler. Everyone partook of that pernicious goose except myself, and the butler handed him to me with his suave smile, which never varied under my frown. Jim looked at me, gave a chuckle, and said, "Ten to one on the plum pudding, Helen!"

And we had it—the hot pot was nothing to its fiery illumination—and everyone said, "What a good recipe our Chinaman had; why, it might have come from Buzzards—ah! had I brought it?"

Jim gave me away as soon as the servants left the room; we were all on the friendliest terms. Everyone gave me advice all together, and the sum total of all that I gathered amounted to the fact "that the Celestials did as they jolly well pleased, and you had better be careful, or you might be left in the lurch."

It was a great success that dinner-party, thanks,

I really believe, to the abominable butler with his hot pot, his goose, and his plum pudding; but my thanks to him I reserved for next morning. The women were very kind to me, and never was servant question discussed with greater animation, or more harrowing details brought to light, than during that half-hour before the men joined us.

Little Madame Himoto sat silent with her polite smile, and when pressed by me for her experience said, "Oh yes—I Japanese servants—'ery good for me." Lucky little Jap!

We played card games of a juvenile description with small Siamese coins for counters; it was the most popular game possible, and we had no counters left afterwards. By twelve o'clock the number one fine dinner was forgotten, and sandwiches, lime squashes, and "stingers" were called for, and apparently needed.

When the Baron had kissed all our hands, and everyone had departed, Jim turned to me, and I saw what was coming. I gave him a smile worthy of a Celestial, and said blandly—

"Concentrate all your attention on letting me out of my frock, Jim dear. No, you must *not* use a knife. Now good-night, for I am already asleep."

A little note from Jim on my breakfast-tray next morning told me not to speak to the butler, for he had done so. I felt distinctly relieved, and when Kim Hee brought me the daily menu instead of the butler, I took no notice. At tiffin it was again Kim Hee who waited on me, Jim being out; then I said, "Where is the butler?"

"He going out," was the brief reply.

A great deal of liberty was allowed the household; if work was done, I did not inquire too particularly as to the outgoings and incomings, only stipulating that both butler and Kim Hee were not absent together. Master's boy was always at

hand, and when I told him not to stay in for me all the time, he gave me a protecting smile of gracious gravity, and announced—

"Missee here, I ready always."

Jim and I dined out that evening, a Bridge four with the Dashwoods, so it was not till next day at tiffin that Jim noticed the butler's absence.

"Kim Hee, tell the butler to come and wait."

"Butler he gone away."

"What do you mean—gone?"

"He gone Singapore. He telling master he going Singapore New Year's Day time."

"That was long ago. I told him he could not go, and he said he would stay on."

"Allesame he saying he going day before."

"Has he sailed?"

"Oh yes; ship he going day before mornin'."

"Confound him!" muttered Jim. "Kim Hee, you know another good butler?"

Kim Hee liked Jim, and though no one could accuse him of being respectful to anyone, yet his manners were not unpleasant, and he occasionally allowed himself to relax into a smile. Just now his expression was a perfect blank.

"Not knowing jus-a-now. Plaps my finding."

When he had left the room I turned an agonised look on Jim.

"Oh, Jim, what made him go? Did I? or did you pitch into him?"

"Oh dear, no; I merely said I wished him to carry out your directions about a dinner exactly, and—— Ah, now I see! the villain, that has been puzzling me!"

"What do you mean?"

"I could not understand his going without his full money. I pay them monthly, but am always a fortnight in their debt. That is to prevent their bolting without notice. I paid them the other day,

but still, of course, I owed the butler something. Yesterday he gave me a long extra account for the dinner."

"I told him to give it to me!"

"He could not face you with that mother-goose, could he? And of course he has pocketed the money. So he is 'allesame top side'!"

"But, Jim, what are we to do? How do you engage servants here?"

"Oh, one will turn up. I expect Kim Hee has a friend up his sleeve. There are not any registry offices, if you mean that, my dear."

"Well, it wasn't *me*, anyhow. I got on beautifully with the butler."

Jim gave a chuckle.

"Yes, I did. Why do you give that silly laugh?"

"Oh, I am sure his feeling for you was quite kind. You should have heard the nice way in which he excused your ignorance about ordering the dinner."

I gasped.

"He said," went on Jim cheerfully, "'My thinking missee not knowing what belong ploper fashion. Any *man* coming this side must have one goose.'"

"I am glad he has gone," I said resolutely. "But, Jim, what did Kim Hee mean about the New Year? That is long past."

"Not Chinese New Year. That is always the beginning of February and lasts some time. Many of them go down to have high jinks at Singapore. Anyway, he has gone, and I am sure he always meant to go, it was not you or the goose; so you had better count the silver with Kim Hee, just for the form of the thing. I don't suppose he has taken any."

Kim Hee introduced a friend two days later, clad in the usual black oil-silk, and Jim recognised the name of a man he knew among his "chits." He asked one or two questions, which seemed to identify him, so he was engaged.

"But I think I can trust Kim Hee," said Jim; "he is a good sort."

"But he is such a mere boy," I said disparagingly. "Why, he can't be more than seventeen."

"About ten years more. He does not allow cares and worries to harrow up his countenance. You try and emulate his serenity."

I felt vexed with Jim and Kim Hee, so I said—

"Your serene friend is just the kind who would enjoy seeing you, or anyone else, tortured, break up your fingers bit by bit, and squeeze you into a jelly. He would turn the screw, and look as serene as ever. I know the kind."

"With your experience you should," said Jim; "and I don't say he might not if there were a general rising, but I also think he might save his master even at the cost of his own life."

"Mr. Smiles said you never could really trust one of them."

"Oh, Smiles is an ass! and I daresay *he* could not trust them, and perhaps *he* had better not. You often get what you expect and deserve."

"Mr. Smiles is very like a good-tempered Chinaman himself, he is quite as serene."

"He is one of those who will never know, all the same. You keep an open mind, Helen, and know you know nothing."

"You old proser! just as if I didn't."

"How about Kim Hee, then?"

"That is purely personal—and it is Kim Hee's prejudice against me, not mine against him. *I* think him fascinating."

"That's right. Well, the next move will be the cook."

"Why?"

"You will see. Get ready to drive now."

CHAPTER IV

EXTRACTS FROM MY NOTEBOOK

I CANNOT keep a journal, but a notebook commits one to nothing regular, and I have plenty of time on my hands. Between the short coolness of the early morning and the after-tea drive with Jim, when again the weight of heat is lifted, there are long hot hours in which I have the world to myself, more to myself than I truly care for. When letters are read and written, the piano notes have become hot and tired, even books have grown weary, I turn to a neat and empty volume, and I make notes of what I never can forget.

My day begins very early, and my household duties are soon over, all but the never-ending one of providing employment for my little maid. I allow myself a respite until eight o'clock, then she steals into my room on her bare brown feet, and begins the small duties in which I have instructed her. She does so thoroughly enjoy helping me to dress for dinner that I allow her to stay for that treat before sending her home, where she sleeps. Washing days leave me tolerably free, and just now I am having a whole week's holiday, for Sap is ill.

She came one morning quite early with a friend, and both had squatted inside my curtained enclosure waiting for me to wake. When I did so I found a weary-looking little Sap with two round green plasters on her brown forehead, and the voluble

friend, who had come as interpreter, managed the word "seeck."

We all sought diligently in the Conversation book for enlightenment, it dealt with every occasion but the present one; so, getting into a dressing-gown, I summoned Kim Hee, the only one of the household who has any knowledge of the tongue of the Siamese.

Kim Hee never disguises his feelings with regard to women; he wishes to have no dealings with us, and his translations on both sides are short and crude.

"He saying he ill—smallpox have catchee—plaps he die."

"Why do you say smallpox, Kim Hee?"

"Plenty smallpox—evelybody catchee—he die—missee catchee too."

There was no regret in his tone.

I sent Sap off to Jim's doctor with a note; her own medical advisers had supplied the plasters. I was glad to tell Kim Hee later that she had measles, not smallpox, and that she would soon be well.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Can do—dlinkee klong water—smallpox having."

And that suggestion gave me a busy time investigating household arrangements as to filters, the boiling of milk, and the using of klong water for washing-up purposes.

I found the fulfilment of Kim Hee's prophecy far from unlikely. When I told Jim of my discoveries, he begged me not to die a "thousand deaths" to which nervousness opened the door, and to remember that "it was written"! But this is sheer folly and a fatalism gone mad, and shows how much men do need women to look after them. I comforted myself with the thought.

Jim found occupation for me one morning. He sent me off to buy tennis balls, which Kim Hoa Heng, the Chinese "Whiteley" of Bangkok, did not stock, but which I might find at the big "Bangkok

Emporium," quite two miles away down the New Road.

"By the way," said Jim, "it is really run by your friend, Mr. Alexander B. Binks. I believe it is becoming a roaring success. He did not see why all the trade should be in the hands of Chinese or Germans, while Americans lay low, and now he is cutting out Kim Hoa Heng—in grandeur and prices, anyhow. If you can't get tolerably new balls there, go to the German's—what's his name?—not your baron——"

"Well, rather not."

"Oh, we can all do as we like out here, but your Baron plays at Diplomacy, not so lucrative as a store."

"Then why don't you start a store? Has not England sufficient enterprise?"

"No, we specialise in teak. Your friend Alexander was not here in time; that is his great grievance."

"What is he here, anyway? A storekeeper?"

"Drop that superior tone, my dear; have you not been to America? He is American enterprise demonstrating in Bangkok, and I think he is getting into everything that is not what he would call 'effete.' I wish he had undertaken the Electric Light Company instead of those Norwegians, and I wish he had the running of that infernal tramway. If he could only get some of those lighters out of Chinese hands I should be glad to do business with him; he would see they ran somewhat to time, and did not indulge in New Years and Ancestors' Graves, but just business. If you meet him in his store, ask him to dinner."

"Jim! I won't! I can't, either; his wife has not called on me, I am glad to say."

"She is waiting for you to call on her, I expect."

"I am afraid she may wait. You know I only call first on the Consuls or Embassy people."

"The American Consul is away—wise man! and Mr. Alexander told me the other day he is doing 'Vice'; he also said he had settled a knotty point in a row between some sailors with great diplomatic skill, and he ought to know."

"Well, Jim, if I meet him, I am going to cut him." This I said with great decision.

"Bet you a pair of gloves you don't. And after that, Nell, go to the electric people and say the fans in my office won't work, and they must come round. And tell them to mend their telephone. Oh, they are slackers!"

Then Jim hurried off, and I ordered the ponies.

The mornings were cool enough before ten o'clock to enjoy driving, and Dum and Dee, as I named the ponies, suppressing the "Tweedle" and thereby reducing the names to very correct Siamese (dee means good), were exhilarating in their dash and speed. The sice, in cool white livery with green collars and cuffs, and a small green forage cap stuck cockily over one ear, cracked his whip and hooted and whistled until I felt as important as a motorist; but nothing got out of our way until death was imminent, and my heart was in my throat.

I should like to have stopped at every turn and had my camera hard at work; but no one would have permitted that, Dum and Dee least of all. There were the picturesque yellow-robed priests, twin brothers of those in Ceylon, lounging rather casually along, two or three together followed by a small boy, studying for the profession after his top-knot-cutting, and carrying his bonze's book or bag, a long embroidered roll. The priest goes by the name of phra, bonze, pungi, but Siam most often calls him "phra," which means "lord" and is significant of the deep respect they entertain for any teacher. Among the many laws which guide his steps in the "Way" is one that almost excuses the

meditative calm which causes the pulling-up short of the "farang's" horses: "It is a sin for a priest to walk in the streets in a non-contemplative mood." And his smooth round head, shaven to glistening point, his sleepy eye, fat and expressionless face, certainly suggest a cow-like contemplation, if not deep concentration. But I have come to the conclusion that head-shaving is a severe test of intellectuality. How would it answer with the ordinary English curate?

The Siamese woman always pleases me—when she is young. She has the most independent way of standing on her bare brown feet, and such an air of business about her, that I for one believe in Siam's future. She carries her baby astride her hips, and it poses there very well. At first I thought every young woman I met was my own little maid, straying from her duties; but as my eyes grew practised I recognised distinctions and grades of beauty and ugliness. I was told they can see no difference in us white people, we all look alike! This levelling thought gave me pause, and made me careful to use my own eyes.

The ugly little Chinese shops in the New Road offer some amusement, the names are chosen with such taste. "Sue Tack" is a tailor, "Soy On" another, "Fook Long" a carpenter, while a small pot-house bears the inscription, "The juice of the delightful Vine." Alarming dragons or bogies are stencilled on the outside walls of the small joss-houses, and the glimpse inside reveals an ugly image on a dirty altar, with scraps of gold paper and untidy tinsel flowers, and many jars of joss-sticks. It is not suggestive of any kind of worship, and indeed does not intend to be given that way. The Chinaman may be Confucian, Bhuddist,—the two are not incompatible,—Tâoist, or what you will, but the common person reduces his belief quite simply to

dealings with the josses. The good high Gods are all right, and They know Their business; it is not for poor mortals to interfere with Them; the joss is the one that needs looking after. He can do you good turns, but his inclination is to play scurvy tricks, and it is your part to humour and elude him; his credulity is a great help in this task. Much useful information is his, helpful to the great business of gambling, but he is occasionally misleading, even though grand promises have been made,—to be paid in gold paper, gullible old joss!—and the joss-sticks and other signs have been consulted more than once. If you have an undertaking of any importance, a new house or the launching of a boat, you must get up-sides with the joss, or your house may be burnt and your boat wrecked, just through his spitefulness. So you give him a paper substitute for gold, and burn it up then and there under his nose. He thinks he has got the real thing, and being well pleased with you, turns his attention in other directions for some little time, and you can breathe freely. Oh, it is the josses that are the devils! You have to square them all the time.

The queer wriggley roofs of these small temples are their only attraction; they suggest dragons' tails and tongues curling up from every point, though they do not bear comparison with the shimmering roofs of the Siamese wats; but then they are different altogether, both inside and out.

Where bricks and mortar, or the Siamese equivalent, do not hold their own, jungle again springs up and reasserts its ownership of the land. How little a time would it take out here for the handiwork of man to be swept away, for the jungle to triumph, and for monkeys to sit and jabber as they swing from bough to bough, where now the Europeans play Bridge.

Jim won his bet, for I did not cut Mr.

Alexander B. Binks when I met him—he did not give me the chance. I was trying some rather dried-up balls, and finding their bounce better than I expected—for one shot off into some crockery—when I heard the familiar voice—

"No, marm, I will trouble you not to play ball amongst the chiney. Those balls are *not* old, leastways not for Bangkok, and you cain't get any others. Why, it's you, Miss Carteret! Bin wondering when I was going to have the pleasure of meeting you again. Gotten over your voyage, eh? But that's an old tale by now. Wal, and what are your impressions of Bangkok?"

They were too numerous to repeat, and quite swallowed up in my astonishment at finding my hand in his and being vigorously shaken.

"Oh—are you here? I hardly expected——" I began, utterly bewildered.

"Why, now, I guess you've been wondering when I was going to bring along Mrs. Alexander to call on you. Can't say I've *forgotten* you, but there's been such a darned sight of chores needing doing since I've gotten back to home, that you've gone to the wall, and that's the truth of it. But I'm coming. I've told my wife she's to come and call on the young lady from England who was mad with me for taking No. 1 cabin—leastways, your friend was. How's your friend, Mr.—Mr.——?"

"Do you mean Mr. Halford?"

"Yes, him—the old gentleman—clean bowled over, wasn't he? That didn't take you long."

"Mr. Halford left the next day, I believe," I said coldly.

"Dear me! Well, I guess you can have as good any day here for the asking. Was he married?"

I stared. "I really don't know."

"Ah! That's not what I call playing the game. Now I always manage to bring in Mrs. Alexander

pretty soon—just allude to her, you know. No false hopes going when I'm around—that's so, marm."

"How thoughtful of you!" I exclaimed, with great earnestness.

"Why, certainly, I have no wish to be otherwise. Let me see, you need balls, don't you? Here, Carl, come and attend to this lady. I have taken on a German staff—cain't do with the yellow Johnnies, casual as you Britishers. No offence, but you've got to get a move on you, even out here in the East. Jim's all right; you may tell him I said so. Well, so long—I'll bring my boy to see you; good boy, and he plays that ball game with the best of 'em, when I let him; but he's learning business with a big B, he is. No shirking for Thackeray A. Binks—that's so, marm."

I watched his square figure in its shiny black frock coat bustling away, and almost wished I had asked him to dinner. He rubbed every hair up the wrong way, but he was such an experience, and he had told me not to shirk any kind of experience.

. . . . . .

Jim and I have been doing the wats, and I am more in love with them and the big benign Buddhas than I can say. I believe I prefer the desolate, forsaken ones, in their neglected gardens, where the quick jungle growth is beginning to swallow up what there once was of paths and orderliness. Some broken steps, some shimmering white pagodas, the bell-tower, and the main dilapidated building are hidden away amidst the greenery. You push open a creaking door, beautiful in its time with inlayings of mother-of-pearl—a work the Siamese excelled in—and there, in the dimness caused by partially closed windows, faintly the outline of the big Buddha looms through the shadows. He is quite calm, he still smiles there in the uninterrupted twilight.

The hands that fashioned him are long since

A Side Street.

Entrance Gate to a Wat Garden.

I face page 76.

dust; the "merit" that was made in the building of the fine temple has been laid to the charge of some long-departed soul; the monks come here no more, other wats calling for "merit" to other souls claim their daily service; but He awaits, unchanging, the "change and decay" that are this world's law.

I picked some blossoms from the temple tree and left them at his feet; they will die, but he will still smile, as though through the veil of the "passing" he saw the "substance" of the Eternal.

Bangkok is scarcely more than two hundred years old, the former capital, Ayuthia, being some fifty miles higher up the Menam, but in that time the ground given over to Buddha's wats amounts to something near a quarter of the city. It is not wonderful, therefore, that amidst the interest of new "merit" the old should be forgotten, and that even the numerous Brethren of the Yellow Robe should not be sufficient to serve and teach in them all.

In the autumn, after the rains, is held a grand ceremonial visiting to all the temples—in use. The royal wats are visited by the king himself, and all the gorgeous royal barges are had out for the occasion; and the other wats by some notable person, when the "laying down" takes place, *i.e.* gifts to the priests of their yellow robes. This ceremony had its origin in the idea that the monks of Buddha should be clothed in any rags they could pick up, and they picked up the clothes wrapped round dead bodies. It was from no sanitary idea, but rather the blessedness of the dead thus honoured and their expedited passage to bliss, that caused the living to seek to ensure the same reward by presenting clothes to the holy men; and so the wearing of the beautiful many-folded yellow garments, and their presentation, became the law.

All the temples, old and new, are refuges for the

destitute of every kind. No priest, in fact no strict Buddhist, will kill any living thing, and to avoid such a possibility for the holy man the law dictates that "It is a sin to cook rice—or to cultivate the ground—as secular people do," but the "secular people" save their consciences all they can, and when they catch a fish, are careful not to kill. The fish soon saves them the trouble "by dying a natural death." But in Buddha's own ground peace prevails for even the loathsome pariah dog, and little children come here gaily to school. The mild yellow "phras" look like gentle, if not energetic, teachers. The homeless traveller may use the rest-house, which forms part of nearly every wat building, but should this be lacking, he may enter and sleep under the shadow of the big gracious Buddha himself, "farang" though he be.

The decoration of some of the walls of these old wats affords the faithful an insight into the possibilities of the next life, that is only rivalled by the imagination of the gentle Fra Angelico.

One recalls his well-known "Inferno" as one gazes at the crude goblins stirring round poor naked little souls in flaming pots, or fierce monsters devouring shipwrecked and wicked persons, ejecting them on to cruel rocks, and repeating the process. An occasional Buddhist angel, half bird, half woman, rescues a deserving soul, but for the most part the artist has considered realistic warning to be the more salutary lesson.

These pictured walls strike a foreign and discordant note that scarcely chimes in with the kindly people who live their gentle, unenergetic lives in smiling content beneath a blue sky. They seem to ask for so little, and to get so little, and that little is so amply enough. Heaven and hell do not touch them, they deserve neither the one nor the other; but after this life's little lesson is

learnt, they will come back and learn another, make a little more "merit," always with the hope of improved conditions. Perhaps the woman may be reincarnated as a man, and take life a little easier, but that is a high ambition!

The "reading of the Law," which is strictly confined to the Pāli tongue, may not be very enlightening to the populace, they may not be very devout church-goers, but one feels that their religion touches their daily lives, and that, in a way, they do not live the material life "by bread alone." The poorest eagerly share their rice and their other foods with the priests, who, begging-bowl in hand, daily go their early morning rounds; and on the ceremonial occasions, or when the pilgrimages to Buddha's footprint at Prabat are organised, the devotees flock in thousands; but as a rule one finds all the wats calm and empty. An imp of a brown boy may follow one round with bright, inquisitive eyes, or in a much-frequented part a band of small inquirers may take an aggressive interest in one's proceedings. Very small coins, or bananas from a convenient fruit stall, make them happy for the day.

In some few wats the priests are found squatting round the centre of the building; the betel-nut boxes are handy, also the necessary spittoons. They chew in contemplative calm while one of their number reads aloud from the Scriptures. It appears a most soothing process, and outside the open door the sunshine dazzles from the dazzling blue, the hot air vibrates, and one solemn old crow from a neighbouring tree emits a "caw" of condensed approval.

In the dusk of one apparently forsaken building we were astonished to find a large congregation, row upon row of yellow brethren, and beneath the big image sat one superior Phra ready to deliver the reading. Silent, by day, by night, of every

colour, from every land, this representative gathering listens in silence to the unspoken law beneath the silent Buddha. A wooden congregation truly, in their yellow robes, but I liked to think of one gentle Buddha beholding always his faithful followers.

It was a more suggestive scene than that of the poor reclining Buddha, a very big "merit" indeed, for he is 175 feet long, and fills his barn-like enclosure of 200 feet almost to bursting point. He is built of brick and cement and covered with gold leaf, but I wonder he can be serene at all cramped as he is on his poor aching arm. The really beautiful and most striking wat in all Bangkok is that of Wat Chang, situated on the banks of the Menam, and we landed at the rickety planks forming a pier in the hot sunshine of the afternoon. Of course there are many buildings, many courtyards, but one central pagoda commands the whole situation.

"You can go up it," said Jim; "it is not really dangerous, except in parts, and the ascent is a work of merit."

"Thanks awfully; I feel humble in this heat, and shall creep into Buddha's cooling presence very soon."

Oh, how skilfully have these artists—they must have been genuine artists—arranged their material! They had whitewash—a liberal supply—a cartload of cracked-up china, also rough pieces of glittering mosaic. How easy it would have been to produce something tawdry beyond words with this very unpromising material. And they have given their country real and original works of beauty. The dazzling white—it is that, thanks to the sunshine and the blue sky—is inlaid with the fragments of china; it has been grouped into clusters of colours, that are flowers, garlands, strange devices, what you will. The glittering gold and green of the rough scraps of mosaic form bands and borders of

bright tracery, and the whole effect is joyous, yet grand. In the courtyards quaint beasts and figures in stone or bronze encircle the wats, and two giants from China, gorgeous and ferocious, keep at bay all demons of the air who would venture on to Buddha's blessed grounds.

That evening Jim and I did not take our usual drive: we bade the little steam launch run up the Menam and in and out of the broader klongs; we visited quaint retiring wat enclosures on the left bank of the river, where the European does not build his houses, where roads are unknown, and only the Siamese huts and the thick border of house-boats on river and klong are found. Lower down the terrible "progrit" of the "farang" is truly present in energetic sawmills, receiving the mighty teak monarchs that float sadly down the broad Menam from "up country"; big rafts of denuded trunks that the mill's teeth clutch and saw into straight and trusty planks, and then export to the ends of the earth. I could forgive the nice, clean, wholesome work of which Jim is so proud, but from the tall chimneys, alas! is vomited forth the most unholy cloud of dense black smoke, a stain against the pure blue sky, and a thick layer of smuts wherever it settles. "Consume your own smoke," I say sternly, and the answer is always the light-hearted, irresponsible laugh that the same remark receives in lands nearer home. "You are a dreamer of dreams to propose such an expensive method; is not gold worth more than sunshine?" But I continue to regret that black trail across the sunny sky of Siam.

We passed the white walls enclosing the king's palace, and the hideous brick building that calls itself the waterworks and deals out cholera germs to a confiding public. Also the delightfully quaint

old palace used in bygone days by the second king, who was generally the first king's brother, and inherited his position with the same amount of trouble that any sovereign usually found in coming to his own in the good old days.

Since the death of the present king's cousin, George Washington! in 1885, no second king has been appointed, so the title is practically extinct. Judging from the complications told of by Sir John Bowring in those interesting volumes of his, this is not altogether to be regretted. In his time the second king was a delightful and wonderfully well-educated man, apparently an admirer of American civilisation, or at any rate of the man who could not tell a lie, as evinced by his choice of a name for his son; neither was he so difficult to deal with as that grand old tartar, his brother, Mongkut. That famous "priest-king" should have been the ideal sovereign according to Plato, for he passed twenty-seven years of his life in a monastery before he came to the throne! It appears doubtful, however, if the priest training overcame the humanity,—brown at that!—sufficiently to realise ideals. During those twenty-seven years that he accepted his fate and stuck to his Buddhist monastery there must have been much heart-burning over his enforced obscurity, and we have no reason to think he did not welcome the news of the death of his usurping half-brother. Any way, he mounted the throne with very strong steps, and on the whole did well by his people. He opened up Siam to European commerce in 1855, and he gave the land its present king, whose youthful mind was partly trained by the English governess!

When I read Mrs. Leonowen's book I felt like regretting her chances. Chulalongkorn's barbaric and exciting papa was a personality to be studied at close quarters, but I cannot conceive his lending

his ear to the whispers of "advisers"! It almost seems that we who have no longer the opportunities have developed the spirit of amused aloofness necessary for the due appreciation of such chances. It is a distinctly modern spirit, and I incline to Gyp's belief that the younger the better. Poor Mrs. Leonowen was not always happy in her situation, though she boldly stood when everyone else crawled!

The klongs were full of water and busy with the bustling sampan, laden with quaint piles of vegetables, green things, bananas, grains; and the bigger rice-boats and the family boats could continue their progress, which is confined to the full tide. But the Menam is always busy, and the hoots and screams of the sirens of many vessels sadly disturb the peace of the air. We turned about and met the breeze. Oh, the relief from breathlessness! and with our own shrill whistle we threaded in and out amongst the shipping and reached our own small landing stage. The lights were out at stern and bow, green, red, and twinkling stars, the mighty mother reflecting them all in her dark bosom as she calmly rocked them. I yield to her fascination by day and night, even though one pays for her near neighbourhood with the constant screaming of her busy burden. Bangkok is not a quiet "Venice of the East"; even the roar of London does not make itself more acutely felt than the many noises of these waterways.

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I will take a little *voyage autour de ma chambre*. Having shut my door on Jim's good-night and his boy's respectful salaam, I go straight to the window, which, uncurtained and open, lets in the night and invites one to its soothing mystery. I can see sideways the turn of the dark flowing river and its many lights; in front of me is a mass of foliage, mango trees, tall waving bamboos, the heavy leaf

of the plantain tree, the fan-like palm branches and the pointed tufts of the areca-nut—its bunch of covered brown-red berries just showing beneath the leaves. Amidst all this darkened greenery trembles and scintillates the tiny illumination of the firefly, not in vibrating showers as in Ceylon, but a constant twinkle here and there; and as one little gleam of flame alights after another on the same tree, they all begin to flash in unison, singing their song of light together.

Just below in the darkness runs our neighbour's klong, a dividing line to the gardens behind the trees. He is a Siamese and an unknown quantity, but he keeps geese, and they are one great disturber of the nightly peace. It is their custom to have attacks of nightmare between the hours of two and three, and they choke and quack until they have awakened the neighbourhood; then they go to sleep, but rise to gurgle over the morning meal at five o'clock. I catch a glint of their white feathers ruffling down below, and I earnestly wish their sleep were eternal.

For a moment, however, peace reigns: the ubiquitous crow, whose first acquaintance we made in Ceylon, has ceased his almost incessant and aggravating "'awing,"—like all Siamese, he swallows his consonants, and instead of the peaceful "caw" which, dropped by a flapping black creature from a June sky at home, adds so greatly to the peace of the scene, this cross-grained bird harries one with a scolding reiterant inquiry. One has chosen a plantain tree, whose topmost leaves are seen from my bed, and he continues to "'aw" at me in the early morning until I open my eyes and answer him back. But now he is off duty, and one might call it still, so entirely part of the tropical night and so absolutely without break is the chirp of the grasshoppers, the croak of the frogs, and the under-

current buzz of every small and innumerable atom of living creature that hums throughout the hot night.

But as one listens, calmed by the low-voiced harmony, it is rudely broken by the clanking crow of some enterprising cock. His challenge is quickly taken up, and from far and near the cocks of Bangkok ask one another the time, and contradict one another lustily. This they do at intervals throughout the night, having no well-regulated ideas about the rising of the sun.

Those miserable pariah dogs think it now their turn, and with hoarse howls and yaps they add their note to the discord; then the river voices break in and momentarily drown all other sound.

Above, in the deep, voiceless blue, the stars hang out their lamps: the familiar "Great Bear" is there; Orion's belt, Cassiopeia; and the Southern Cross also, that disappointing constellation, may be found near the horizon. But each star is a wonder, so full, so brilliantly does it shine down on the world, giving its light with liberal outpouring. Oh, the beauty, the calm, of this blue canopy above!

"Ping—ping," and an involuntary sharp slap on one's own bare arm draws one away from starry heights. Alas! the many little fiends with which one is surrounded! I turn from the window; it is time to seek shelter behind those white curtains, and as I move a tiny lizard darts from near my hand, where it had been motionless. They say you can never catch one of these lightning-like little beasts, and indeed it is much the same impossibility as putting salt on a bird's tail. They flash, quick as thought, from one end of the wall or ceiling to the other, and as long as they are silent no one can object, but occasionally they find voice in a very large "quack," which reminds one of a well-

developed duck, and makes one study the three-inch long little reptile with astonishment. My dressing-table, with a bright electric light over it, is my next move, and as I lay my hand on my comb I give a start. Someone is in possession, someone made of tortoiseshell apparently, and waving defiant horns as though to warn me off his property.

"But it is mine, and I want it," I explain.

He takes a step forward, and his two-inch long horns wave fiercely, and he seems so big, and so like a cockroach for all his fine colour, that any boldness on my part soon vanishes.

"I beg your pardon," I say meekly, and turn to my brush.

Buzz, buzz, and bang! Oh, my goodness! what next? And then follows very real alarm, for something is struggling and fighting in my tumbled hair, and I dare hardly touch it for fear of what that something may be.

It resembles a grasshopper when finally shaken out, and with one leg at a very acute angle off he flies, to whirl angrily round the electric light, where others of his kind and the horny brown buzzers are storming in vain. I turn off the light and switch on one by the bedside, and, still pursued by persistent blood-sucking mosquitoes, I hurry to the refuge of those white curtains, when a loud voice, almost in my ear, gives me so violent a shock that my terrified "Oh!" is nearly strong enough to penetrate the thin walls, and I fly to the other end of my long bare room. I was nearly writing empty, but that in good sooth it was not. I know the strangely human voice well by now, but it never fails to really startle me.

"Taktu, taktu, taktu," it shouts, literally shouts, as a boy might do, seven or eight times, and then lapses into a contented kind of "gwr-r-r-r-r," winding up into silence. I recover and begin to

search for my aggressive friend. Looking down from the cornice, with the beadiest of black eyes placed prominently forward in a toad-like head, is the fat, unwieldy body of a kind of lizard, some twelve inches long, supported by four clumsy turned-out legs, his reddy brown and spotted sides still panting with his last strenuous vocal efforts.

"Taktu," we call him by his Burmese name, but the Siamese say "Tokai," though I could never hear him so announce himself. They say he brings luck to a house, and it is foolish to drive him away, and he will only bite if driven to it; but I prefer him on the verandah and well out of hearing. Now he slowly waddles round the ceiling on the lookout for flies, mosquitoes, or even a small lizard—for he can go swiftly when he chooses—and I finally lose sight of him by the window. Hoping he will make his exit, I again make for the protecting curtains, and there I come to a standstill, a very surprised and interested standstill, for, clinging to the folds with a long giraffe-like head and neck, is the most brilliantly green novelty of some six inches in height. A grasshopper? A cricket? But no, he seems much too big. I wonder if he hops or flies or walks, and I wonder if I can secure him. Oh! He makes one bound, and so do I, and then we look for each other. He has sprung on to a small table near, and sits up waving his two long lean arms somewhat after the imploring fashion of the mallee, then he joins them together in silent prayer. The attitude suggests his name, for I had heard of a "praying mantis"; so with care I place a tumbler over him, giving him breathing space, and hardening my heart to his pathetically waving arms, I leave him for identification in the morning.

Finally I creep inside my curtained enclosure, and examine it carefully to see that I have it to myself, and that against this slight defence the

hungry mosquito may ping, the brown buzzer may hustle, in vain; the imploring mantis, the lightning lizard, the shouting taktu, they are all outside! I am safe. Thank goodness! I lean back with my arm out to press the electric switch, and think what a contrast this strange bedroom forms to the little room at home, with its small unprotected bed, and the fire sending cheerful light waves over its blue walls, when a great, heavy, soft substance is flung against my hand, there is a scrambling, clutching and dragging at the curtains. I start up and scream, frankly and loudly scream, for it seems as though my whole canopy is coming tumbling down about my ears. There is a thud on the floor, and a voice from the other side of the wall calls—

"What are you doing? Is it nightmare or a burglar? If it's a burglar, call the watchman; he is just outside, and has never had a job yet."

"It is not a burglar—it is"—I peer through the net, and see the fat panting taktu glaring up from the floor,—"it is a beast of a taktu. He sprang at me through the curtains—I thought they had given way."

"A taktu! and you scream like that! Disgraceful! He probably saw a dainty morsel—not you—on your curtains. Put out the light and go to sleep."

My friend has disappeared; presently from the other end of the room I hear him "gergurring," but not so contentedly as usual, I fancy, and I seek the land of dreams, where again I meet the praying mantis, and his green arms wave and clutch my hair, and catch the brown buzzer there; the taktu grins from the top of my canopy, shouts the time, and then gurgles himself to sleep.

. . . . . .

Jim and I have been dining out a good deal lately, and everywhere we meet the same people

and the same goose; it grows quite monotonous. None of the women know anything of Bangkok, its history, or its wats. "If you *had* to live here, that would be quite enough for you; you would want no books on the subject."

I suppose if the soul is yearning for Cheltenham or Bath it is hard to offer it Bangkok. That it adds to the pleasure of life to take an interest in the place you have to live in does not approve itself to them, but one subject really did wake them up, and me too, for I was growing tired of half-understood gossip. I will never claim to be above interest in the doings of other people, proper or otherwise, but if you do not rightly know who the "she" or the "he" is, and why they should not have done what they did do, the point is lost, and attention flags.

Then someone mentioned a cremation, a grand cremation! and Mrs. Donn had been awfully lucky, and had a silver box presented to her; and Mrs. Barker had nothing; and everyone wanted to know how and why, and told of cremations they had attended, and what they had acquired there, etc. etc. At last I cornered one nice smiling little woman.

"Who was cremated?" I asked.

"I don't quite know—a Surrawongse, I believe. A large family they are, and related to royalty; so of course the king was there. But no one cares much who it is, you know; there has been plenty of time for even the relations to get mixed. Why, they keep them for years! The last crown prince was not cremated until he had been dead six years. The grander the longer, I believe. Any way, it is looked upon as a jollification by the people, who all crowd round, and have theatre shows and sights; and the king, or someone, throws little gifts, limes with small coins inside, and there is a scramble.

But you ought to go to one if you can, as you care for the place and its doings. Pity no one told you of this one. It was quite good."

"How can one find out?"

"Oh, ask—why, ask——" My little friend's attention was gone; the men were trooping in from the dining-room, and she accosted one: "Mr. Wood, come here; I have to scold you——" So I left her and was soon making Baron von Gulden swear by his Fatherland that there should be a cremation for me, "von great big schplendid burning of some nobility, and you schall kom to it because I shall be inwited, and I shall bring you wis me."

We really cannot quarrel with Germans when they are so nice and big and good-naturedly fat as my Baron—even our responsible papers cannot make me, though truly just now I am out of reach of this daily influence. So now I am waiting, not for anyone to die, but for someone to be ready to be cremated; but no one can say who is being held in reserve.

A humble burning I had seen. At the foot of Wat Sachet, a yellow-crowned pagoda that is situated on Bangkok's one and only hill, a steep mound in the centre of the town, is the common cremation ground, and as Jim and I and the nice fair boy, Mr. Perry, toiled up the zigzagged sides, we looked down on a pile of smouldering flames, and the flitting forms of a few priests, and some booths where fruit and sweets were for sale.

"That's a poor person's cremation, it is the common ground; sometimes they aren't burned, they are——" He stopped.

I stopped too, climbing Wat Sachet is a great and unaccustomed kind of exertion.

"Oh!" I groaned, "I am out of practice. Let us look over this wall, if it won't give way."

WAT SACHET.

A NEW KLONG.

To face page 93

"Grand view, isn't it? Flat—flat paddy-land! And jolly little quail to be found there, too!"

"I like it—this quaint old brown Bangkok, the broad Menam, the shining glints of klongs, the wat roofs; and there is the king's white palace, and far, far away still the shining river, and the nice brown earth that means plenty of rice. But go on: when they are not burned, what happens?"

Jim had wound out of sight. He also said my taste for cremations was unhealthy; women certainly had morbid minds, and he hated being asked to funerals.

"Well, it is rather gruesome," went on Mr. Perry at last; "they just expose the body, and it does not take long, what with the birds of the air and the beasts—those beasts of mongrels——"

"Oh, don't!" I shut my eyes on the vision. "I know, I have read of it—but I thought that was old times, old barbaric times."

"They aren't all past. Why, it is only this present king who has allowed people to approach the royal presence on anything but their stomachs. Fact, that! and they say—mind you, I don't know it for truth, but they say—some poor wretch was always buried alive at the making of a new gateway or bridge. They just caught one and popped him in for the good of the place, a sop to the possible Powers of Darkness."

"But the king is civilised!"

"Oh yes—quite so; and the crown prince has been to Harrow and Cambridge, and made the grand tour; but all the same, when he came back, if he had not caught just the exact propitious moment for landing, he would have had to wait on board another ten days for another propitious moment: the priests would have seen to that; and he only caught it by three minutes. His papa overslept himself, and no one dare wake him; so they waited down at

Paknam, and then they had to hurry up to the royal landing stage. Such a rush, and such a wash they made! Heaps of boats were swamped, and nearly all the landing stages gave out; but they caught the moment! I tell you the captain bucked about that record run; he is a Dane, awful decent chap, and I 'spects he has a time with 'em. These heathenish royalties *can* be upsetting, though I like the king, and the fat little prince is a good sort. Let me give you a hand up the rest of this mound. When I first came to Bangkok I used to run up and down daily, and feast my eyes on this one rising ground. It's made, you know, filled in with pots and pans and rubbish heaps."

"Oh, why did they do it?"

"Why, it's a splendid big 'merit'! and so original too, unless the Tower of Babel was one. I can't imagine Bangkok without this centrepiece of Wat Sachet, the green little hill with its funny yellow cap on top. Don't you like it?"

"Yes, I do," I cried with relief at the top, where Jim was smoking placidly, and inside the small wat was the usual placid Buddha, with a row of tiny little gilt Buddhas all round him. A smiling priest gave me one in exchange for a tical, and Mr. Perry said they cost threepence in the Sampeng. But this one is holy, so well worth ninepence more.

. . . . . .

The new butler has turned out a complete treasure; he is smilingly attentive to my orders: "Missee likee," and "My seeing evelyting plopper good—number one good,"—but in spite of all this, the cooking has been going from bad to worse. Jim said last night it was "vile," and everyone knows the result of "vile" cooking on men's tempers. And Jim maintains it is the butler's fault. How can it be the butler's fault when he does not even do the shopping? But when a man says, "The soup is

like klong water, the fish putrid, the cutlets"—it was mutton day—"old shoes, the pudding—pah! and the savoury rancid," well, it is very unpleasant for the mistress, and my Bridge afterwards—we had two men to dinner—was as bad as the pudding. And it certainly was Jim's fault; he ended with the sternest look at the butler, and "See this sort of thing doesn't happen again, butler."

I felt sure the butler would go, and groaned in spirit. But no—this morning while Jim, quite placid again, and I, much relieved, were at tiffin, Kim Hee ushers in a tall figure in shiny black. Both bow politely, and with a wave of the hand towards him, Kim Hee announces, "Cook he tank master. Cook he saying he going."

We both looked up, startled.

"Why's that, Kim Hee? He can cook very well when he likes." Jim's tone is always friendly to Kim Hee.

That inscrutable person again waves his hand.

"Cook he tank master. Cook he going now."

I broke in.

"He can't go now, Kim Hee. Some people are coming to dinner to-morrow, and he must make a good dinner."

Kim Hee is not respectful, he still looked at Jim.

"Cook he going now. He say 'goo'-bye.'"

"Tell him he can't go, Kim Hee; not until I have found another cook. That will do."

So the black and white figures retired.

"But will he, Jim?"

"Probably. Of course it's the butler."

"Now, Jim! Why don't you like the butler?"

"I do; he is a very good servant, but he won't work in with this cook. He probably wants a pal of his own in here, and we shall have to have him. I told you he would go. Confound the whole pack of 'em!"

I felt guilty. It seemed I did not manage the household at all well. Manage!—Goodness me, I began to laugh as I thought of the word.

"What shall we do, Jim—shall I put the people off?"

"No—of course not. I daresay he won't go; and if he does, someone else will come; and if he doesn't, there is my boy. He is a splendid cook, better than these yellow beauties."

"Your boy! But will he?"

"He does as he is told, that is the comfort of him. But whatever you do, Nell, don't worry. No woman should come East if she has the faculty for worrying; it is worse for her than the climate."

"That's very fine talk, Jim, but how about last night? Who was worrying then? Who said the soup was klong water—the fish——"

"Oh, that! That is nothing. I said it because Woods and Rogers couldn't, and it needed saying. I was not worrying. Only you must not revoke at Bridge."

"I didn't revoke, but of course my mind was disturbed."

"You did. I said nothing, and Woods was wool-gathering."

"Well, I am very glad the cook is going, then. And if your boy can cook——"

"Oh, that's all right, but it 'no belong his pidgin,' so I only fall back on him in emergencies. You interview the butler. Ta-ta, and 'wear a smiling face,' though China fall and cooks fail."

The cook went, the dinner was excellent, and the smiling butler has a treasure of a friend with irreproachable chits who comes in two days' time. But Kim Hee disturbs me; he is like that unpleasant "chiel among us, takin' notes." I wouldn't mind if only "he'd print 'em," but that is just what he won't do. He will never tell.

. . . . . .

I have had a letter from Cousin Mary and from Gyp. They are revelations, and not being so reticent as Kim Hee, I read them to Jim during our evening drive, and Jim drove right into a dilapidated rickshaw in his mirth, and there were two fat old Siamese women inside and three children; they were so tightly packed they all upset together and stuck together, but they vowed vengeance. We left them swearing badly. Jim says it was the coolie's fault, but when they come to him for money in a proper spirit he will give it them. It is a great thing never to be in a hurry, not even to do good works. There is no doubt that they will come.

This is Cousin Mary's letter:—

"DEAREST HELEN,—I have been distressed about Gyp lately, and many times wished you were here to talk to her. Not that any talking or advice makes any impression on her. Really I think she was born without a conscience, and her only idea of duty is to have a good time. She is not a flirt in the sense that girls were flirts in my young days —she seems too frank, too downright, to be called one—but it is there all the same, and she has been amusing herself with our kind host. He is that still, even though I made an arrangement when we consented to stay on here. Nat, as I told you, was so anxious we should do so, and he has been able to live with us, it is so near his duties. I thought he was quite safe, and she had several other 'friends' she calls them; and one day I said so, most unfortunately. She only answered, 'Oh, do you think so? Now I wonder if that is true!' And then it all began, right under my nose. I can't approve of that sort of thing, it seems to me so heartless, but I suppose they get over it. Any way, if convenient to you and Jim, we will come on to

you very soon; and as I won't face your experience in the *Nam-Po*, do wire me that I may book our berths in the *Simla* next time she sails. I have been wanting you very badly. I have no one to talk things over with. Nat is so angry with Gyp, it has become very awkward. I don't really like a hot climate, and I see Bangkok is higher up on the map, so it will be in every way a great relief to come to you."

"Oh, oh!" remarked Jim, "and what has the young woman to say for herself?"

This was Gyp's letter:—

"DEAR NELL,—Mother is writing you reams. I told her not to, as she is very hot; but old people won't believe in the wisdom of youth—hence their many mistakes.

"This place is very enervating. Mother is getting so slack I think we had better come on to Bangkok pretty soon, so wire if that suits you.

"Smiley has been making a bit of an ass of himself, but as he meant well, I don't bear him any serious grudge. He has gone to Sumatra for a week or so (a kind of purgatory, if not the other place, according to him), so doubtless he will come back quite a reformed character. But Mother is bent on leaving before he returns, which I don't think polite or kind. You see there was someone else, and Smiley was awfully useful as a buffer. But that special interest being over, I do not very much mind seeking 'pastures new.' Also we must get Bangkok over and you away from all attractions there. By the way, what have you been up to without my eye on you? Japan is waiting, remember, and I simply must get out at China to buy jade in Canton. I am quite crazy about jade. Well, so long, my dear. Too hot to hold a pen or

anything else. That is how I came to a rupture with Smiley. I cannot see the fun of holding hands in this sticky climate. What do you think?—Your dear Coz, G. G.

"By the way, I am sorry to say Nat is an ass, and has no sense of humour. I suppose he takes after Mother's side of the family."

And here we smashed into the crowded rickshaw.

We sent a wire on our way home, and in a week's time we may expect Cousin Mary and Gyp. That naughty Gyp! What victims shall I prepare for her here? My nice blue-eyed boy, or my good-natured Baron? It is rather a comfort Jim is too old—in fact, I am half afraid he won't like her. Gyp is not everyone's ideal.

. . . . . .

The household is greatly excited over the coming visitors, and they all regard it from a personal point of view except master's boy, and he smiled gravely on me as he said—

"Missee glad other missee coming. Missee sometime very much quite alone."

The butler informed me the new cook must have an extra kitchen coolie to cope with the extra work. Kim Hee also requested another myrmidon to do his extra bidding. I was pointing out to him a procession of ants, yards long, that was winding its orderly way like a regiment up the white walls of the staircase, and I told him to trace all such invasions to their source, and then effectually to close the outlet, for the ants were becoming a pest everywhere, and his answer was—

"No can do. Master giving one more house coolie. Missee here, other missee coming, and one more missee coming. Too many mississee, my thinking."

I shook my head at him.

"You are a rude little Chinaman, Kim Hee. Why you no likee any missee?"

"My belonging master's boy. Plopper house fashion, no missee. Plenty women, plenty tlouble. China way, good way," and he nodded like a mandarin, as we imagine him.

"But China way must have women. Why, you will marry yourself some day."

It was impossible for Kim Hee's eyes to open, so he shut them slightly, and looked at me curiously.

"Missee telling master, one more house coolie, can do."

When I told Jim he laughed. Why, of course, there had been an extra house and kitchen coolie for me, so naturally two more were now wanted; and as to Kim Hee, he was married, his wife was "top side Hong Kong," she had small feet, and so could not run away. Oh, there was a great deal to be said for Kim Hee's views on women. As I was finding out, the East had many points to give the West!

And the sices wanted extra help too! "Well," said Jim, "I have engaged a small Siamese boy to stand behind the victoria, and they may fight over him. I don't think any Siamese boy or man will overwork. How about your little maid—doesn't she want an understudy?"

"I expect they will bring their own. Cousin Mary does not say."

"But mind, Helen, I won't have that Gyp of yours annexing my boy. Goodness, what are you letting me in for!"

Well, it did not matter to me, I thought philosophically, as I rested on the verandah; extra coolies only meant their wages, about eighteen ticals a month, and how they managed out there in the compound was not my affair. That simplified

household difficulties considerably. To me came the butler: he is a tall Chinaman, and his long fine queue hangs down to his knees. The common coolie has very often a long, thick, coarse tail, but I am sure it is not aristocratic to have so much hair. The butler has the smallest mouth possible, and a hidden joke seems to lurk behind his narrow, slanting eyes. I fear I am the joke, but why should I not be? He certainly affords me amusement, and he has a kind, confiding way with him, such a contrast to Kim Hee's stern disapproval.

The butler was full of matters domestic.

"Missee liking new cook? He velly good man, my knowing. Ol' cook he not so good man, lars butler not good to him, not telling what missee say. My telling and he makee velly good. More better one cook he staying, and butler staying, other men saying, 'Oh that master, that missee, no staying,' alle same velly bad, no good master no good cook. More better now."

I nodded sagaciously; the argument sounded familiar.

"True, butler. Why you leaving your last master?"

"Oh, he too muchee dam nuisance. Always talkee, talkee. No good. This master he much more better master."

"He is a very good master, liking very good butler, doing all just as I say." I put in a word for myself. "Cook can have other coolie helping when ladies come."

"Alle light, missee. Second cook he going, ol' cook he fetching away. Chief cook he catchee second cook and coolie, alle same two men finding. My telling No. 1 cook what missee telling, alle same missee liking. More better that way."

I placidly smiled. "Much more better, butler."

. . . . . .

Cousin Mary and Gyp arrived to-day. They were due at eleven in the morning, and I was punctual at the landing stage. No sign and no word from Paknam, so I tried again at one o'clock, and at three, and finally hurried up just in time at four. Cousin Mary looked very tired; they had had a bad tossing up to the blessed protection of Point Cambodia,—even the elegant little *Simla* could not save them that,—but Gyp was flourishing as ever doth the naughty bay tree! Jim turned up in time to drive Cousin Mary home, and to jeer at me for my day of waiting, and then we all went back to tea.

Cousin Mary has brought no maid. They had a succession in Singapore, and Gyp found them one and all wanting. At the last moment a Chinese treasure failed them.

"No go—no go, missee. Amah catchee one leetle English baby going England. Much more better amah likee leetle English baby. Plenty money catchee."

"You perjured wretch! May you catchee a good sickening storm!" was Gyp's parting blessing.

"We thought you would find us one here, Helen, or we can share yours," said Gyp calmly.

"Of course," was Jim's kind answer. "Nell has made her girl quite useful, and you should hear the Anglo-Siamese conversations that take place!"

"We might try it, because Jim's boy can always help me," I said obligingly.

"Oh, I will have Jim's boy," cried Gyp, "that beautiful bowing Indian! A 'boy' is much better than a maid. I found that out with Nat's Pompey."

I smiled, and Jim scowled at me over the back of her chair.

"He isn't really much use for ladies.; Helen is only joking. We can easily get you another maid. Sap can find one, and teach her too."

So Sap, through Kim Hee, was instructed to bring a promising candidate.

"His young bloder's wife can do, he saying—velly good washing, doing alle light, *he* saying," was Kim Hee's doubtful translation.

So the next morning Sap introduced a shy yellow-brown maiden, one of the Luk-Chins, by name Tong-dee, and they both squatted with extreme respect on the verandah as we all interviewed them through our interpreter. He made no disguise of his feelings! "More missee, more maids! Alle same tlouble and bother." "Too muchee dam nuisance," as the butler would say.

"They ought to crawl and grovel on their stomachs before you, Cousin Mary. You represent the Great White Queen. Down with you, little girls!" cried Jim; and the brown eyes laughed back at him and all of us, in the easy side position that is squatting in Siam.

Then they pattered away on brown feet to undertake a day's washing. They did together about half what Sap would have done alone.

The next day they both came very late, and I told Sap they should have half money for that day. Gyp unpacked all her boxes, and both little maids enjoyed themselves thoroughly. When they were tired they went to sleep on long chairs in the hall, and Gyp retired to the verandah. The havoc in her room was so colossal it took Cousin Mary and me a good hour of hard work to make any place clear.

The next day Gyp forbade Tong-dee to enter her room again, and Tong-dee squatted calmly waiting for further orders. Sap, thoroughly demoralised, did practically nothing, and both little faces were freely rubbed with Gyp's best powder, while the indentures of their little fingers in the box gave them away. The Siamese use a white face powder

a good deal, specially for the babies, but they sprinkle it over wet, I should say, and it has the effect of white spots on the dark skin. Gyp was very angry, and as we all had mosquitoes inside our curtains that night, we shared her feelings. Jim's boy took pity on me, and promised this should never occur again, and it never did.

The next day Sap came alone, and I never heard her talk so fast or fluently before. Kim Hee's translation ran as follows:—

"He say one man makee alle light—two men he talkee, talkee, talkee. One man he work. He say more better missee have one, doing evelyting all the mississee. How much more money missee giving?"

My reply was severity itself, and Sap rubbed her brown toes together with rather a scared look. But she brightened when told that if she did her duty properly she should have a present at the end, though I was not going to raise her wages, and her late conduct had caused me pain.

Kim Hee did as he liked with that speech, but I trusted him not to soften it. He gave me almost a look of approval when I refused higher wages. Oh, he is a stern young judge!

So peace reigned again, and Sap was busy and happy. I did not see much of her except to explain Gyp's orders, but Gyp took to the Red Book, with a view to shopping in the Sampeng, she told me.

CHAPTER V

IN THE SAMPENG

It was only a little after seven o'clock in the morning when the grey ponies landed us at the entrance to the long Chinese bazaar-street called the Sampeng. We stepped out of that dreadful New Road, with its traffic of bustling and mooning humanity, and its hustle of rickshaws, gharries, carts, and carriages, and the awful black, shrieking, tearing, snorting tram, into a small side opening leading to the Sampeng. And here we met the faithful Mr. Perry, who had been solemnly sworn into our service the preceding evening.

The Sampeng is a long, narrow, winding street, two miles long, and so narrow you can touch the shop counters on both sides with outstretched arms, as you warily pick your way amidst the boards and stones and mud and drains that form the road. Running and winding its queer narrow way, here and there crossing a main road or a klong, is this curious little row of shops, or rather counters. Occasionally there is an upper storey, and all appear to have rooms out at the back where everybody lives. Shutters can be put up if needed, and the pawnshops have limited hours, but the other counters do as they like. In one small shop you will find nothing but cotton goods, in another silks or toys, and in the flower shops one can buy tube roses, marigolds, and the garlands, little and big, for Buddha and boys' top-

knots. Here and there is a food shop, meats of curious shapes, weird birds composed of bones, and the little whole and much-adored pig,—for we are in Chinaland,—also bowls of hot soups, and cooked messes done up in a twist of green leaf; shops full of Chinese shoes, such fascinating foot-covering! also iron work and forges, a gambling hall, a joss-house, and occasionally, over a narrow klong, is flung a rickety little wooden bridge, where quickly the old and the dilapidated of both sexes collect to squat and beg.

A break in the line shows a patch of grass with a wat and pagoda—a sunny, smiling patch amidst the narrow, shaded little rabbit warren; for though open to the sky and hot sun, and also to the merciful breeze of the cool early hours, the street is often shaded with bits of cloth or matting stretched from side to side.

Looking down the long vista, it certainly forms a most picturesque sight, and is also, it cannot be denied, full of powerful whiffs from the rubbish heaps and little open gutters that border the road. Vivid patches of green in food shops, broken dashes of strong sunlight, an occasional bright-coloured panung or Malay sarong or Indian's cloth, mix with the crude blue of the Chinaman's pants, as all the brown and yellow humanity thread in and out, the Chinaman being the only person full of business.

Here the short-cropped head of a Siamese, the stately white turban of an Indian, the bright scarf of a Burman, the bald forehead and long tail of a Chinaman, all jostle together, and the children, as nature made them, or washed a bright yellow with turmeric powder, join in the throng, their little heads crowned with the top-knot, or hanging out little tails helped in length with red tape, according to their parentage; for the little Luk-Chin generally adopts its papa's persuasion,

A Little Brown Boy.

To face page 1

and patronises the pig-tail. It formed the gayest moving picture, and I grasped my camera and sighed to think it could give me no colour. But, unless from a balloon, no one could sketch in the Sampeng. One would be mobbed and stifled by the good-natured interest of the garlic and betel loving people, and even a photograph was nearly an impossibility. Mr. Perry did his best for me: with chaff and a bit of hustling he got the quick-assembled crowd to one side; and the row of shops, with a bench on which several Chinamen were squatting, bowls of soup and rice in hand, was open to me. I fixed my distance, but before I could wrestle with the shutter the whole lot jumped down and strolled into the shop.

"Wretches!" said Gyp. "But, Helen, we can't waste time with your horrid camera; we have only one interpreter, so, Mr. Perry, please come into this shop. I want that pendant of red stones—are they rubies?—and that little silver box, and oh! what a fascinating incense pot!"

We all entered the doorway and sat on the low counter, and the lady in possession came forward, hitched up her panung, gave her broad chest-scarf a pull,—the two did not meet, and were not intended to,—and she also squatted on the counter, which is the raised floor, chewed her junk of betel-nut, exposed her reddened mouth and blackened teeth, and waited for further developments. She had a broad, good-tempered face, capable, and with a shrewd twinkle in her eyes, and her arms and neck were well modelled, though rather too fat. They certainly do their best to spoil any chance of good looks that come their way, but she, on her side, eyed us without any signs of admiration. Our cool white silk shirts and white skirts, becoming hats, and neat brown or white shoes, provoked not one symptom of envy. Curious "farangs," bother-

ing about many clothes and many foods, hot and troubled about many things! Had she heard of "Martha," that is the name she would doubtless have given us, from her contented and cool squatting place on the counter.

Mr. Perry began a cheerful and chaffing conversation, and she shifted the betel-nut to answer with a mouthful of "ong-wong-aw-kaw's," and then rose lazily, and with a key opened the little glass cupboard that contained the treasures our hearts were set on.

Gyp wanted the slightly barbaric ornament made of roughly cut rubies and emeralds and set in very yellow gold. It was a native bit of jewellery, for the Siamese like jewellery, and some of the old gold chainwork is quite good.

"What will you give, Miss Gresham? and then I will begin by offering half. And please don't look too eager; lay it down and take up something else with interest."

Gyp promptly made a face at her desire and said, "If it's worth two pounds I will give it—but is it?"

"You will not get it under, so we will begin at twenty-five ticals."

Then the bargaining began in earnest, and at one point the ornament was replaced in the cupboard, and that was locked with a very decisive gesture.

"But I want it!" said Gyp, as indifferently as she could.

"Oh, you will have it, but I think the time has come for us all to get up and go away."

Cousin Mary jumped up. "Well, I am glad. You don't really want it a bit, Gyp. I daresay it is rubbish, and you won't wear it in England. But, Mr. Perry, if we go away can I come back and buy those silver boxes? They would make such pretty presents."

"Mother! they are for betel-nut. No, I cannot have you take to the betel-nut habit. I would rather you took to the drink! Come away, Helen."

With great decision we opened our parasols and prepared to depart.

Mr. Perry threw a few words over his shoulder; they were: "Forty ticals quite enough, there are plenty more shops. Good-morning."

The lady hesitated. "Forty-two—and that's finished."

"Will you give forty-two?"

"Yes," said Gyp, who was quite determined since a doubt had been cast on her need.

And we all sat down again on the counter. Cousin Mary's boxes were soon settled, and our brown friend examined the dirty paper money, and rang out the silver coins on the counter, and laughed away at Mr. Perry's jokes.

The Chinese husband looked in from the back; he held the yellow baby fondly, and rubbed its little skin gently as though polishing it. He too had taken to the betel habit, and it had an even worse effect on him than opium, at least on his looks.

Then we parted with smiles and "Sabai."

"Oh, you are splendid, Mr. Perry!" said Gyp. "Come again with me to-morrow morning, we could do so much more alone."

I made for a china store. The common bowls and basins out of which everybody eats rice and curried stuffs had dawned on my imagination as a possible dessert service. They are beautiful in shape and colouring, and so cheap, we only bargained for the sake of principle.

When we rose from the counter, Gyp had vanished.

"Oh, I wish she would stay with us, and it is getting so hot! Shall we not go home, Helen?" sighed Cousin Mary.

No sign of Gyp the length of the narrow street in view, but rather a crowd outside some small door. We walked there, looked in, and behold—Gyp! It was a small hall, and the ground was marked out in

circles and figures; several Chinamen were squatting round, but it was not full quite so early. Gyp was in one group of five, and turned round gaily.

"Oh, you've come! I have been having such fun gambling. What do you call the game, Mr. Perry? Isn't it Fan Tan? I was taught its simple principles, and I've been winning. See, all these little coins. Oh, now I have lost! Go away again, all of you, you have brought me bad luck. How much does he want? I went on the three, you old ruffian, three!" Gyp held up three fingers at the very grave Chinaman.

"Gyp, come away. It isn't the right thing to do, is it, Mr. Perry? Do bring her away."

"I am not a parcel, Mother. Just one more stake. Come on, Helen, try your luck."

The cupful of small shells that served as counters were sorted out in fours; the numbers over, there being four divisions to the circle, decided the winner. They divided equally—all lost but the proprietor.

"Bosh!" said Gyp, "that doesn't count. I must have another try. Oh, you old slow-coaches! Well, come along then; Mr. Perry and I will come alone together. Don't you love a gamble?"

"I never tried it in the Sampeng. No, Miss Gresham, after your Bridge last night you must stick to that. Fan Tan is beneath you."

"It's just a common gambling——" began Cousin Mary.

"Gambling hell? Oh, Mother! what language! And I call it as innocent as a church. It's a good thing I won, for I have no money with me. Mummy, you pay up everything, and we will settle when I have made a little at Bridge. I must gamble hard, unless you are going to give me that gewgaw. Don't you think she ought to, Mr. Perry? I am her one and only poor little daughter, and all the presents on which she has thrown away her money are for her three rich, ungrateful sons. Well, forward!"

I should like a photograph of Gyp as she sailed down the narrow Sampeng, a good swing to her white linen skirt, a lace scarf falling, a big picture hat flopping, an air of proprietorship about her, the biggest thing there.

She gave her little coins to the old beggars.

"Don't," cried Mr. Perry, "you will be mobbed."

But on she went. She had mastered the words "Taw rie?" "How much?" but the answers were the difficulty. Fingers are a great aid at figures, and Gyp had purchased a pot and cover of the Siamese pottery before we found her again.

"I have brought her down to five ticals; she began at eight. Money, Mother, please. And what is 'Sip song bat'? She says 'Sip song bat' to everything I want."

"It is thirty ticals, and you have been done over that pot. Give her two."

"I can't. I said five. I go round the world upholding British credit. Mother wants to convert, and Helen to reform; they don't do half the good I do."

"I don't!" spontaneously from both of us.

"You can't give five tics for that pot; you will be ruining the prices. I'll never take you to my favourite pawnshops if you buy like that," said Mr. Perry firmly; but his blue eyes had been twinkling over Gyp ever since the gambling hall.

"All right. Perhaps it won't hurt England's honour. What will she take?"

There was a good deal of "ong-awing," and at last the lady was left smiling over three and a half ticals. Gyp said England's credit demanded less bargaining in this case.

"Carry it, someone, or I shall drop it," and she swept on.

"Don't go out of sight, Gyp, in this smelly place. And I am really tired, and want to go home. Helen, do remember we have to walk all the way

back to the carriage, and you said this street lasted two miles." Cousin Mary looked very weary; she was not at all her usual bright, strong self. Singapore had tried her, and Bangkok was not exactly the place to brace her up.

Mr. Perry gave her his arm; he turned all his nice boyish attention to her.

"We don't have to go back, Mrs. Gresham; the carriage is to meet you at the next opening, not quite the whole length of the Sampeng. I did not think we could do it all, but we have been here two hours—more; so Miss Gresham must tear herself away. Where is she?"

"I have an eye on her. Cheer up, Cousin Mary; the end is in sight."

In a little shop full of bright new gilt Buddhas of all sizes we ran Gyp to earth this time, and we found her counting off ticals with the fingers of one hand and stroking a very fine specimen of a Siamese cat with the other. It looked superciliously out of its pale blue eyes and gave little jerks to the kinks in its tail, but it appeared to rather enjoy the caressing hand on its sleek fawn sides. The owner, a grey-haired old Siamese lady, looked about as indifferent as her cat, and shook her head at the counting fingers without troubling to say a word.

"Do make her say a price, Mr. Perry. I must have a cat, and this is such a beauty. Mother, aren't you dying to buy it? I think we shall need one so much at home, you and I, to make us feel a truly domesticated pair. A third person is sometimes so useful when we aren't on speaking terms! Mr. Perry, say Mother will give whatever she wants for it."

Cousin Mary wavered—she loves cats, but her prudence came to the rescue.

"You see, dear, we are not going straight home. I fear we cannot take a cat to Japan!"

"She won't part, Mrs. Gresham. I have wanted

that cat before. Have a Buddha instead, Miss Gresham; much better travelling companion."

But Gyp turned up her nose at anything so glitteringly new, she wanted an old one, a real one who would inspire her, and Mr. Perry promised to be on the lookout.

"A real beauty! like Jim has? Oh, all right. But look here, I can't leave without buying something. I will take those two little Buddhas, and give them to Mother on her birthday."

But this Cousin Mary did not hear; she had caught sight of the grey ponies at an opening in the road, and was making straight for them.

Mr. Perry promised to come round to tea, tennis—"And Bridge," interpolated Gyp—in the afternoon. I was "at home" that day.

"Well, I am glad I don't have to play tennis," sighed Cousin Mary. "Helen, it is wonderful to me how you have stood this place. I don't think it is any better than Singapore."

"It is not supposed to be, but it was cooler in January than it is now. It is heating up, as Jim says. He says I have the Northern coolness still in my blood; it takes a year to get it out. But I have been so interested——"

"Ah, that's it," remarked Gyp judicially. "You must take your thoughts off yourself, you must——"

"I'm sure I have had enough to take my thoughts off myself. Other people have kept me pretty busy," said Cousin Mary grimly.

"Now you are going to rest. We will do an occasional wat in the early morning, and drive round after five o'clock, so that you may see something of Bangkok."

"You shall do the wat things with Mother, Helen. I am going to stick to the Sampeng."

"Mr. Perry won't care to spend two hours there every morning, Gyp."

Gyp looked at me wickedly out of the corners of her brown eyes and said, "Won't he? Wait and see!"

This is a new Gyp. I fear the Smiley incident and others have given her a taste for the game. She has never been exactly diffident of her powers, but this kind of thing did not appeal to her. Gyp likes experiments and experiences, and that taste may lead one in many surprising directions. However, the next move may be a convent!

Tea and iced coffee were on the verandah, beautified by the mallee with palms, ferns, Eucharis lilies, and crotons; by the croquet lawn, the limited but smooth stretch of grass that bordered the river, were ices and drinks; and the tennis court lay ready at the back for strenuous spirits. Gyp appeared in an elaborate garment with a trailing skirt.

"Won't you play tennis, Gyp?"

"*You* are not dressed for tennis!"

"No, I can't play anything. I must talk pretty all the time. Do be ready to play."

"Not much! If you are good, I will teach some people a game called 'Chase me, Charlie,' with the croquet balls. I told Mr. Perry I would teach him. Who is coming?"

"Anyone."

"How stupid. Always select. That fat German who was here last night?"

"Perhaps."

"Oh, because we might have a Bridge four if he is coming."

"I don't want Bridge this afternoon, Gyp. It absolutely spoils a party of this kind. We shall play this evening at the Dashwoods'."

"Now, Nell, did I want to make you play? Are you keeping to the compact?"

Gyp shook her head and swept away.

Cousin Mary was looking at me to see my next move, and I felt quite nonplussed. Bright idea!

here was Jim, cool and smiling in the whitest of flannels. Jim should manage her.

"Don't worry," was all Jim's comfort, "but bridge! Oh no—we have enough of that in the evenings. Can't you manage that Gyp of yours, Helen? Oh, you leave her to me."

The next time I saw them Gyp was walking arm in arm with Jim, both laughing, and soon Gyp reappeared in short skirts, calling, "Come on, Jim, we will challenge the world."

"Consul Russia," "Consul German," "Consul Japan," announced the butler. It was a safe title he bestowed on every man he thought deserved it, and then followed the wives of those who had any, and their lords, also some of the bachelors of Bangkok, and I was kept busy; so were the butler, Jim's boy, and Kim Hee. Great gaiety came from the croquet lawn where Gyp and Mr. Perry were instructing the little Madame Himoto in the mysteries of "Chase me, Charlie."

It became one of Bangkok's most popular games.

A strange-looking group was coming round the drive, a long black coat, a very tall and ample lady in white, and behind them the fattest boy I had ever seen. Could it be! Yes, I recognised the voice —the family of Alexander B. Binks was down on me!

"Oh, Jim!" I murmured, but he was not there. I clutched Cousin Mary's arm—

"You must help me. I don't know if they will know a soul, and they're Awful!"

Then I said I was very glad to see them, and would they have tea, coffee, etc. etc.; and Master Thackeray was evidently prepared for tennis.

"We've come at last. I never go back on my word; that's so, marm. This is *my* wife, Miss Carteret."

"Vurry pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Carteret. Alexander has told me of his acquaintance with you."

"Friendship, my dear. Miss Carteret is a most well-informed, inter-resting young woman. This, Miss Carteret, is *my* boy. Thackeray is going to be worthy of his name, if *not* in literature, in something quite as big."

Master Thackeray gave my hand an almighty grip.

"Miss Carteret—vurry pleased to meet you."

"Where's Jim?" called Mr. Binks. "You have quite a gathering here this afternoon; glad we've come. Set the boy to play, marm; he's not going to drink any before he's earned it. That's so—eh, Thackeray?"

I introduced Mrs. Binks to Cousin Mary, and found further introductions unnecessary; Mr. Binks evidently knew everybody, and most of them by their first names. He wandered round making himself at home, and I obediently undertook Master Thackeray and led him up to Gyp, to organise a four at tennis.

She did not echo his "Vurry pleased to meet you, Miss Gresham"; she nodded, "How d'ye do," and to me aside, "Get him off on somebody else, Helen; Jim and I are going to play the energetic lady and Mr. Perry."

An American man, or boy, is never going to be heavy on hand. Master Thackeray made his way to the cooling drinks with a directness which was worthy of his father, and, earned or not, he was thirsty. He offered me lime squash as he told me "Stingers" were not for women in his opinion; he also said his mother was his ideal of all a woman should be, but with calm judgment he "allowed" that he could not compare her with other American women, as there were none in Bangkok—those ladies of the American Mission he did not count, not putting much stock in missions, though his mother upheld them. Neither had he been home for five years, during which time he had "matured."

Other women in the world, it was generally conceded, had not the finish, the refinement, the grace and charm of earth's fairest flower, the American woman!

I told him it was very nice to hear him talk so prettily of women, but without doubt he still had much to learn. In the meantime, he was not to take another "Stinger" until he had obeyed his papa and earned it.

I enjoyed his surprised face, one whole round look of astonishment; and then Jim came up and took him off, and I smiled to see the four, Gyp and Master Thackeray, Mrs. Dashwood and Mr. Perry.

"You manage her very well," I said to Jim.

"My dear girl, it's perfectly easy. Women always are if you know how to take them. Ask them to give in in little things, and be firm in big! They don't often occur, and little things do. I expect Cousin Mary has fussed over Gyp a deal too much. She has told me all about Singapore; bit of devil about her, eh? But you can't expect a girl not to take all the scalps she can. Come, don't you begin throwing stones!"

My party ended when Mrs. Alexander B. Binks slowly rose out of the arm-chair into which she had at first sunk, and shaking hands in a heavy, lethargic manner, this rather full-blown flower of womanhood called "Alexander" and "Thackeray," and sailed to her carriage.

"Come and see me, all of you. My day is Toosday."

She was not of the brilliant, scintillating variety, but Mr. Binks had been telling me she had all the virtues, and I readily agreed with him that they were the most valuable in the domestic circle.

CHAPTER VI

PLEASURES AND PALACES

A PROJECTED dinner-party met with nothing but polite refusals, and while feeling rather puzzled and dismayed at this failure, a big envelope enlightened me as to the universal " previous engagement."

It contained a card with gold lettering which was Siamese to me until I perceived a small folded paper with a most considerate translation. Then I learnt that " H.R.H. Somdetch Chowfa Krom Phra Parnuphantuwongse Voradej has the greatest pleasure to invite Mr. and Miss Carteret to the Boripah Palace in honour of H.R.H. Crown Prince Maha Varavudh on Thursday, 19th March, 9 p.m.," and a P.S. permitted " half dress or evening dress."

Our card was late in arriving, but Jim promised Gyp that the kind gentleman with the many unapproachable names should extend his invitation, and have still more pleasure in asking her and Cousin Mary.

He was the King's brother, commonly called the Ung Noi, and Jim knew one of his secretaries, so the matter was not difficult to arrange.

This was the first " palace " among our " roamings," and I feel that I ought to justify my title with an impressive description of it. But I must reserve that for the King's palace, which was one indeed. The Boripah Palace is, I was told, Italian in conception, but has certainly an air about it not entirely European in character; it was, how-

ever, lost in a dazzle of electric lights; the square in front of it was also brilliantly illuminated, and hither all Bangkok had assembled. This moving mass and the building formed only a background for rows and curves and circles of glittering light, and all were held in the quiet, deep blue arch of the Eastern night, where "the great stars globed themselves" and seemed half to rebuke the twinkle of man's device.

It was a glorious night, and the grateful breeze from the sea came that evening with some coolness on its wings; of late it had borne with it a reminiscence of hot ovens, and the long-desired stirring of the sultry air had been somewhat of a disappointment.

We made a little party of six, for Jim said it was sinful to keep three whole women for the benefit of but one man, however appreciative, in a place where the sexes were so wrongly divided. So after dinner we mounted in three victorias, each drawn by a pair of the swift Siamese ponies, and our white-garbed Jehus cracked long whips, and we raced, absolutely raced, through the streets, the white, the black, the grey ponies entering into the joy of it, and skimming over the bumpity roads as though their tiny feet were winged.

We came to a standstill in the open space in front of the palace, and Gyp from her victorious place behind Mr. Perry's blacks called out—

"We won easy. Mr. Perry is going to race these little beggars, and I am going to back them for all I am worth. So we won't leave Bangkok before the races, Helen."

The lazy, good-tempered crowd hardly parted to let us through, but the little ponies understood their countrymen, and went as delicately as Agag; and we presently found ourselves, with a crowd of other Europeans, mounting a broad staircase, guided

by gentlemen with long pink and white staves, such as Bo-peep required to herd her wayward flock, and we were presented to a squat and dusky little man, clothed unfortunately in "half dress," which meant nothing nice and barbaric, but merely an undress uniform of clumsy cut and dull colouring.

All the Siamese gentlemen were in this undistinguished costume, and, alas! no ladies were present. They do not often patronise public, or semi-public, functions, but when they do, Worth of Paris furnishes the elaborate and fussy blouse, and Siam holds its own with the quaint panung. Some few of the most emancipated spirits join in the legation annual dance, and then, it has been remarked, their legs are the most attractive things about them; quite Europeanised, except for the fact that they are on view.

But for this evening, though it was whispered the King was coming, it was known the Queen was not, and Europe merely greeted itself.

Everybody was there, and everybody wandered through long corridors and galleries, and I received a lesson on the beauties of old Siamese china, of which there were many cabinets full. And everybody got very tired of waiting, and examined a wonderful programme of strange delights that awaited us in the garden; but nothing could begin until some of the Royal Highnesses had condescended to put in an appearance. To be punctual, or even approximately so, is beneath the dignity of an Eastern potentate, and the higher the later is the rule. Mr. Thomson, one of the ushers, was getting tired of being questioned, "Is the King coming?" At last came the answer, "No—he says he won't," —so the telephone bade them "send the Crown Prince immediately." And after a bit he came, and everyone crowded into a row, all the legations in front, length of residence giving precedence; and

somehow, where America should have been, Mr. Alexander B. Binks as vice-consul found himself, and his wife and the fat boy found themselves, "right there" and much to the fore.

The Crown Prince, who is short and round and beamingly good-tempered, ran the gauntlet of this line, and bowed and spoke graciously to each representative, and was then bustled away to have supper, and everyone bustled away too, though supper did not sound as attractive as the garden.

Under what queer things we found the table groaning! A venturesome spirit had here scope, but having seen Gyp pause with a half-swallowed dainty and a crimson face, I went warily and tried strange patties and pastry twists and round enticements, that turned out to be onions, on some of my faithful friends.

"Don't tempt Providence by taking the champagne," whispered Mr. Perry. "I am going to restrict myself to soda water."

Then came a general move to the garden, and there we met all the spare inhabitants of Bangkok, a most orderly, happy crowd. They squatted and walked, refreshed themselves with queer foods at little tables specially prepared for them, and enjoyed all the "shows" in a phlegmatic and contented spirit, helped thereto by the perpetual gentle chew of the beloved betel-nut. And without that assistance I thoroughly enjoyed myself and all the various entertainments provided.

Under the vast blue tent of the silent heavens, with its myriad lamps throbbing down to us, by garden paths and trees outlined with fairy lamps and glimmering with lanterns, we strolled from one novel delight to another.

To the sound of the monotonous tum-tumming, or the shrill whistle of some reed instrument or bamboo pipe, the clash of cymbals and the occasional

sing-song of a chorus, all acting independently of one another—so it seemed to Western ears—we found Chinese Celestial dancers, figuring in and out with rose lanterns; under the jambu tree "mythical beings," half men, half birds, engaged in a mock battle—they took great care never to come to close quarters; the dwellers of Annam and the Mons Settlement performed dances and marches, waving candles and flowers and singing in voices unmistakably boyish. From one to another we wandered, enjoying the curious dresses, the weird music, and the glory of the night. The Crown Prince and his following, which included all the diplomatic corps,—little Madame Himoto in charming delicate grey kimono leading with the Prince, and the family of Alexander Binks as much to the fore as could be managed,—did their duty nobly, and missed nothing.

Our party separated and rejoined, but Gyp was lost for a long time. I saw her the wrong side of the jambu tree with Mr. Perry, but I passed on, for she was evidently completing his education, and some of her favourite couplets from Omar Khayyam reached me—

> "A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
> A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
> Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
> Oh! Wilderness were Paradise enow!"

Also his answer—

"I don't know him. It sounds ripping. I say, how awfully clever you are!"

I thought so too, when I found Jim also much impressed by so extensive a knowledge. He seemed innocently to imagine that to have reached Persia and the thirteenth century, you must necessarily have traversed all intervening literature.

I assured him the difficulty was to have escaped an *edition de luxe* of the popular pessimist, and

reminded him I had sent him a beautiful white vellum copy, which he had probably never opened.

"Oh, I remember!" laughed Jim. "I gave it as a Christmas present to Mrs. Dashwood, or one of 'em. But you should have heard your Gyp about 'a loaf of bread and *thou*,'—good emphasis on that,—'and the wilderness was Paradise *enow*.'"

"Yes, I did hear her," I said quietly; "she said it very prettily to Mr. Perry under the jambu tree. By the way, what sort of a tree is the jambu?"

I rather wondered over Jim's impatient shrug and "Oh, that boy Perry would swallow anything!"

The last item on our programme collected us all together, and round a pond on whose dark surface floated green electric light water lilies, we witnessed some genuine Siamese dancing performed by "Celestial youths and maidens." These heavenly visitors were very beautifully clothed in gorgeously embroidered garments, red, green, and orange, heavily covered with gold work, with arm bands, breastplates, and anklets of gold, and strange headpieces enclosed their faces, which were whitened and remained as immobile as a mask.

The "dance" consisted of strange contortions, and wavings inside and outside of arms, hands, and fingers; double joints were needed for most of the movements. At one time they donned long golden talons, and this emphasised a finger movement very considerably. The feet also walked backwards and forwards and inside and outside, and the poor knees were kept at the bend nearly all the time, until one's own ached for sympathy.

A chorus of ordinarily dressed Siamese women and some few instruments made music. I am often told that we of the West cannot appreciate Eastern music, our ears are not trained to distinguish their subtle intervals, they only affect us as being out of tune or monotonous; so I dare not

comment on these compositions, but I feel I may be permitted to say that the voices, according to our ideas, left very much to be desired.

The Crown Prince, and those who thought themselves of sufficient importance, mounted a gilded pagoda-like stand, and at a given moment commenced throwing a shower of confetti, particularly sticky snippets of coloured paper. Everyone followed suit, and that ended the entertainment, for we all desired to escape and find our carriages.

"It is past one o'clock. I am so tired," sighed Mrs. Dashwood in passing. "Did you like it?"

"I should think so—every minute of it."

"Ah! but it is your *first* time. I call it deadly."

. . . . . .

I had often driven round the white walls of the King's palace, up by the Pramane ground, a large expanse used for royal cremations of the first order, but I had kept the "doing" of the inside until Cousin Mary should join me.

The roads of Bangkok leave room for improvement, but where His Majesty is wont to drive the quality is vastly superior; the bridges also are substantial, and do not call for so constant an appeal to Providence as those in remoter regions from the kingly path. So up to the Pramane ground is a favourite drive, specially at the hour of sunset, when the Siamese flag of the White Elephant on a red ground, which flies by day, is changed for a curious old lantern and a peacock's feather, which rises by night, while a blatant brass band plays popular European airs.

At the King's new country residence of Dusit Park, some three miles out of town, the roads also are tolerably good, and paving stones for the palace itself were thoughtfully presented to the King by the Minister of Public Education. He had them removed from one of the principal schools.

A very fine new bridge leads to the main drive. I hope no local genii claimed any victim at the foundation of the substantial piece of brick and mortar; it looks as though it were stout enough and European enough to answer for itself. It was formally opened on the King's birthday with much pomp and rejoicing. He generally gives himself a birthday present of a bridge, and it is most thoughtful of him; in time the rickety planks will all disappear, and in spite of the loss to the picturesque, this will save the driver much strenuous language.

The park is reclaimed paddy-ground, and that means an immense amount of labour. Also all the drives are bordered with embryo avenues, and that is likewise a difficulty. Many of the trees were transplanted at a good size, and any subject who possessed a desirable tree was supposed to be only too pleased to place it at His Majesty's service. It has been said that the King's prerogative extends to his well-known liking for china, but one has heard this kind of thing of other royalties than those of the East.

Of course all the great families can but be honoured when a daughter is accepted into the palace among the King's ladies; but a daughter is not quite the same as one's pet specimen, nor does her absence cause the same blank as a nicely growing tree!

However, to be a king in the East still counts for something, even though the heavy whispers of the Western "advisers" must occasionally make poor Chulalongkorn wistfully remember the grand old times of his barbaric papa, and his summary manner of treating intruders so graphically described by Sir John Bowring.

It was with his kind permission, given through the usual channel of Siamese prince or phra, and a European intermediary, that on a bakingly hot

afternoon we all arrived at the massive gateway of the white wall-surrounded palace, and in we went.

I have never yet found much pleasure in this perfunctory visiting of palaces. Nothing is ever shown that one really wishes to see, and no aid to the imagination is afforded by a walk through large and bare rooms, containing only stately arm-chairs, empty of majesty; and I always turn instinctively to the windows and the glimpse of garden. "Let us get out there, where there is life and meaning."

The façade of the palace is very fine, glitteringly white, with deep verandahs led up to by stately marble steps; above these are massive balconies surmounted by the curious twirls of the Siamese double roof, rising up finally into a sharp pagoda-like point. It is the wats on a larger scale, and adapted to family life. That life is, I expect, very greatly modified by European fashion and furniture. Tottenham Court Road is now responsible for most of the princely interiors of Bangkok. Into one only I had really penetrated, following up an introduction given by a college friend of Jim's, and there we sat on much-upholstered sofas and arm-chairs, arranged in stiff rows the whole length of the room; carpets and curtains to match suggested the shop-assistant, who had doubtless proclaimed them "our newest patterns and much sought after," and the final touch of a pianola made one wish the world was wider, and tariffs quite prohibitive. I feel sure that could we have pried into Chulalongkorn's private sanctum we should have found deep leathern arm-chairs, a heavy Turkey carpet, a many-drawered writing-table, elegant appliances for smoking; the betel-nut boxes and spittoons would be there too, and, I doubt not, the *Encyclopædia Britannica!*

With relief we entered the garden; the wonderful East held its own in that sun-soaked spot. Palms and banyan trees, peepul and the sacred bo tree,

A Guarded Wat.

The King's Palace.

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curious tufty, stumpy specimens some of them, and others that in a short time would be breaking into glorious bloomings, seemed planted as shelter to rows and groups of strange stone figures and animals. A Chinese monster was hobnobbing with an incongruous gentleman in top hat, and a stone Chinaman calmly surveyed the massive proportions of a Siamese elephant, while he supported on his head a lamp that had been borrowed from Piccadilly.

These strange decorations led us along a broad stone walk to the many wats that occupy much of the King's grounds; the queen's palace is enclosed within them, and very strictly guarded from all inquisitive eyes. "Kang Nai," or "The Inside," it is called, and is a complete town of itself, having houses, market-places, prisons, and all other necessaries within its own walls. And here only women and children live—not exactly on the lines of Tennyson's "Princess"—the only man who enters its walls being the King. It is told—I hope it is not too good to be true—that once upon a time a man, nationality to be guessed, resolved even as the prince to enter the forbidden portals, and he chose a collapsible balloon as his manner of entry. He collapsed in the garden, but the alarm was given; stalwart daughters of the plough surrounded him, and he was speedily ejected, alive, but with very little curiosity satisfied.

The group of royal wat buildings is most beautiful, and one is dazzled by the gleaming gold of the central prachadee or pagoda, which is really a relic mound, some image of Buddha or sacred thing being buried in the centre. Small and large, gold, white, yellow, or mosaic, these sugar-loaf shaped pagodas are planted everywhere amongst the trees, and the wats and bell-towers, with the gleaming green and gold of the double and treble wat roofs and their twirling points, form a fantastic

and fascinating group that it would be hard to beat.

In Wat Prakow, the King's very special wat, where the ceremony of taking the water of allegiance is held, we saw the famous green Buddha. Emerald he has been called, but now the judgment inclines to jade. He is about sixteen inches high, and stands raised on the summit of a much-adorned altar, so that it is impossible to pronounce very decisively on his beauty. He is certainly green. Gifts adorn his altar, the same heterogeneous and incongruous collection found around most of the altars; rows of little gilt Buddhas, more or less tawdry flowers, clocks, mercifully not on the tick, glass vases, silver trees, tributes from depending states, and china vases,—two very fine and large specimens are from Dresden, presented by the "Mailed Fist."

The yellow-robed phras were squatting contentedly around in the body of the building, appliances for rolling the betel-nut all handy, while one of their number in a droning voice read from the "Law." "They study in the Bible," explained our Siamese guide, whose words were very few and very correct.

Outside the quivering hot air made the temple shade grateful, the "Thou shalt not" of the many Rules evidently appealed to the students. There is very little one cares to do with the temperature getting on for 100. A feeble little breeze had just sufficient strength to stir the small bells that hung thickly under the sloping roof; the tiny sound gave the finishing touch to the lazy heat. Since I could not be a yellow brother and chew the cud inside, I voted a return to the carriages and a rapid drive down the King's best roads to meet all the air that was moving.

But first we had to visit the so-called white elephants, the sacred beasts, kept in the royal stalls.

Both the whiteness and sanctity is by courtesy, and though I had read of the honour in which they were held, that certainly must have been in the good old times, and not in this degenerate present.

A white beast, or blue-eyed beast, is, in Buddha's countries, held to be a specially high incarnation on the way to Buddhahood, and when a "white" elephant is captured "up country," there are great rejoicings, and he is brought in triumph to the King's stables, for with him he brings luck.

His whiteness is but a dirty greyish colour, and his keeper does not take much trouble to keep that over-clean. Also the stalls leave much to be desired. So we fed the poor prisoners with sugar-cane, and wished for them the grand free life of the jungle. It is hard to pay so dearly for being a bad colour, but Gyp kindly suggested that some penalty ought to attend my possession of blue eyes. She thought a shaven head and white robe, as worn by the Buddhist nuns, might help me on "the Way" very considerably. Those bright brown eyes of hers, with which "she looketh up, she looketh down," she frankly confesses are meant to see all she can in this world, and after commenting on the sacredness of the colour of mine, she added with relief, "Thank Heaven, mine aren't blue!" I felt like one of the poor elephants—off colour, but holy.

We were late home that evening, for the "side shows" of Bangkok attracted Gyp's attention. On the Pramane grounds we found the kite-flyers, few in number, and the kites, though high up in the breathless air in some miraculous fashion, were nothing special in structure—in fact, I never saw any come up to the descriptions given in my Bangkok books. But the great game of gambling here, as on every possible occasion in Siam, finds a fruitful vent, and much money may hang on those

invisible lines, and the descent of the light-headed kite be heavy with loss. Then we watched a more exciting game in the Siamese football. A few lads collect together, and a ball, covered with some kind of wicker-work, is kept tossing from one to the other by means of any part of the person but the hands, chiefly with a dexterous back kick from the bare heel. Gyp wished to get out of Jim's cart to try her heel at it, so Jim drove off rapidly. Jim told me Gyp was always good with *him*, but I noticed he had a little salutary nervousness as to what this "good Gyp" may either say or do. He does not quite approve of the cigarette in public, but he obediently gives her a light in the home seclusion.

We drove past "Haman's Gallows," as Gyp called the very high swing that adorns the centre of a big square. It is some hundred feet high, and used at the feast of the harvest, when amid other jollifications bags of money are suspended from the top of the swing and kept at a troublesome distance from the venturesome spirit who works himself in that direction, and has to grip at the bait with his teeth only. An unenergetic crowd specially loves this demonstration of struggle, and so do those who finally succeed in pocketing the ticals.

On our way back an open-air theatre attracted us, and we paused to watch the performance, for all other theatres are for the time-being closed. By the light of flaring torches we admired the very impromptu slashings and fightings, love-makings and tumblings, that men and boys hidden in theatrical "properties" performed, to the calm, contemplative enjoyment of a passive crowd.

"It's rather like bad charades, isn't it?" remarked Gyp.

"But it goes on for ever, so we won't wait to guess the word. Come along, I'm hungry," said Jim.

Before we all parted that night we arranged for

an expedition to Ayuthia, and to see the King's summer palace at Bang-pa-in, not far from the old capital. We decided to go by train, as the quickest way of covering the hot miles that lie between Bangkok and Ayuthia, and to send the steam launch to meet us there, with servants and food, and so to return by river.

There are a few steel lines, marking the "farang's progrit," with their burden of black puffing engines and wriggling box-like tail, that cross the brown flat country, startling the wide-eyed inhabitants and causing the terrifying horns of the monster buffaloes to be raised in marvel, but Siam has still much to expect in the way of "opening up." Perhaps it will not be needed, for the rivers and klongs of Siam are such convenient waterways, and the Siamese are never in a hurry. It is a sensation that should not be cultivated in the East, but then I do not like this ruinous "progrit," and I have no axe to grind. If I had, might I not be even as the others? A hearsay that was repeated to me may not be true, but is certainly typical.

It was the birthday of a mighty monarch of the West, and Chulalongkorn graciously conveyed his congratulations to his imperial brother through the residing minister.

The answer was: "Thanks, but *my* master likes deeds much better than words."

Siam's king paused to wonder, though he must be getting almost accustomed to the little ways of Westerners. What could he do to oblige that practical master?

A railway contract was under consideration: if it were given to that country's firm, the minister's master would doubtless consider it a very pretty compliment to his natal day. So it was given; and a nation that knows how to push, in season and out of season, is bound to get on, for this is not a nice

retiring world where worth alone receives recognition.

However, the "farang's progrit" enabled us to reach Ayuthia in three early morning hours, so for once I was grateful to it.

It was in that rather primitive attempt at a Pullman car that I met the "mom." That word is typically Siamese in its abrupt ugliness, and whatever kind of a man or beast one was bidden to guess it stood for, I venture to assert no one, not even Alice in Wonderland, would guess right in a thousand ventures. It is the Siamese equivalent for "duchess," but I cannot help smiling as I associate duchess with this little "mom." However, even English duchesses are not all young and beautiful, nor do they invariably wear strawberry leaves in their hair; and if dignity is one of the ducal attributes, then had the "mom" her full share. The Siamese costume does not give any artificial assistance in that direction; each man, and, harder still, each woman, has to express herself through the national drawbacks. The "mom" wore the panung, and it has no advantages for an elderly lady from our point of view. It was made of some dark-coloured silk, and looked neat. I had asked my little Sap to unwind hers for my benefit and then twist it up again. How on earth those very amateurish knickerbockers "stay put" has been one of the wonders of the world to me ever since. There are no buttons or hooks, not even a safety-pin! a corner is twisted here and another there, and—they stay! The top piece was, as usual, a white blouse; I do not think Paris was responsible for this one, more probably Mr. Binks' "Emporium." A broad piece of pink ribbon gave the finishing touch, crossing over one shoulder and under the other. But the legs left nothing to be desired, so trim were they in their

black high-heeled shoes and stockings. Instinctively, however, one drew one's female petticoats around one, the "mom" looked so unprotected. It is certain she had no such feelings, and she passed her small, well-shaped hands over her unadorned grey stubble of a headpiece, doubtless thanking Buddha she had no need to encumber herself with a mass of flowers and straw and tulle. One inch of hair is very practical, but how long will Siam consent to the "hair-cutting" ceremony for girls, I wonder? especially as some of the King's ladies have been seen driving in very fine creations in the way of hats. I think the hair is only a question of time, and though the reforming spirit, of which Gyp accuses me, is rapidly dying out, I should like to see the Siamese woman as nice-looking as nature made her. But in that case she must cease from the beloved betel-nut, and that is asking much. The "mom" was provided with a very big quid, and she expectorated without any false shame.

Mr. Rogers, who was one of our party, presented me to the little lady, and she kindly told me she was going to call, Mrs. Dashwood had asked her to do so. She spoke good English, though not very much of it, and affected the English colony; her sons had been educated in England, and she was training them to follow her energetic footsteps and interest themselves in the development of their property, whither she was now going with baskets of paper flowers and cigars for the celebration of some festival. Her husband is contemplative, if not actually obstructive; but the King, who it might be imagined would encourage international friendliness and native energy, looks on this "mom" with disfavour. Of course she is a relation,—the King's numerous household commits him to being father, uncle, cousin, or son-in-law to every noble family in Siam,—but so far this firm

little lady has gone on her own initiative, and is becoming very rich.

Of course she did not tell me all this; we said a few polite things, we bowed, we shook hands, and she soon got out. Then Mr. Rogers talked, and when only people will talk Siam, they are very interesting. Probably the "mom" will call when we have left; even she will not be able to think time is of any moment, and Jim won't know what to do with her. "Why do you care to know these people?" he asks. "You can't talk to them, and their English only covers perfunctory sentences. Even if it were fluent, you could not converse with them; you have nothing in common—nothing but the air one breathes, and that nearly does for us of the West. It's pure curiosity, Nell, and that is not a thing to be encouraged. Remember Eve!"

Now that lady and her story has always been as a red rag to my argumentative powers, her action has been so utterly misinterpreted. Curiosity, translated thirst for knowledge—hers was no common inquisitiveness—is a most laudable quality, without which the world could never progress. We try to suppress it in children, and, in spite of Eve's example, little girls learn that lesson quicker than little boys.

Mr. Rogers had been mostly in Burmah, and as a quite young man had gone into one of the Buddhist monasteries, which are the schools of the East, to learn the language. He had learnt much else. Like the author of the *Soul of a People*, he had absorbed the beauty of Buddhism, and to him, therefore, the veil that divides West and East was not so closely drawn; he had been a scholar, not a teacher, and the opening had been made.

"How splendid!" I cried. "I should like to get me to a Buddhist nunnery. Oh! one wants a hundred lives!"

"Perhaps you will have them," he said quietly.

"But even in this incarnation you could find your chance. There are some ladies in Siam who have shaven their heads and donned white garments, and serve Buddha; but I hardly think you are quite prepared for that yet! I have also heard they indulge in much scandal, and, in fact, are very like any other community of old ladies. The temple service is a comfortable retreat for their old age. You are not ready yet."

Jim laughed. "My sister will tell you that gossip and scandal are only a sublimated kind of curiosity, which is a most laudable thirst for information, and without which there is no progress."

I ignored Jim. "I have always thought that men and women were mixed in this world for a good reason. They both deteriorate when they do without each other. That is why I want Jim to marry."

"Then you really wish to join a Buddhist *monastery*?" said Mr. Rogers. "I will give you an introduction to my dear old pungi. But here we are—this is Ayuthia."

"Cards away, Gyp," said Jim, jumping up. "Oh, Cousin Mary, how can you allow that daughter of yours to play piquet in the morning?"

"Allow! Jim, don't you know better?" laughed Gyp. "Why, I have improved the shining hour, and gathered five ticals out of the flowery Mr. Perry. Is this the place? All right, we will see what we can buy here, Mr. Perry. You stick to me; you are more useful than Jim. He can't bargain a bit."

"There's nothing to buy in Ayuthia. Perry, don't rush off; you have the permits and things, and we must meet that Siamese Johnnie whom Phra Surat insisted on sending to escort us. I shall tell him off to you, Helen. I don't want to plumb the darkness of his heathen soul. Now, Gyp, you are going to have your mind improved, see the prisons and the palaces and——"

"Oh, Jim, don't let us be too energetic," sighed Cousin Mary. "Where shall we find the launch?"

"Right you are, Mrs. Gresham; I vote for the launch and lunch right away," was Mr. Rogers' verdict.

If anyone has a decided opinion on a hot day it is bound to be followed. We went straight to the *Lotus*, where that treasure of a "boy" had everything in readiness, having brought the launch up the evening before, with our things on board; for we were to pass the night at one of the King's houses at Bang-pa-in.

Ayuthia is a smaller edition of Bangkok, without its bigger buildings or New Road! It crowds to the edges of the broad shining river, and has its floating population as well as the dwellers in more steady structures. It has also, in memory doubtless of its former importance, a kind of fort used as prison, and a tower which it is the bounden duty of visitors to climb. Cousin Mary sat at the foot in as much shade as was to be discovered, but it was 96° even there. Gyp from the not very high top assured me it was ripping and quite a breeze to be felt; so on I struggled, and was rewarded with just what one expected, a view of the winding river, klongs, paddy-land, jungle, and the points of wats and pagodas at a little distance rising out of the green, and about fifteen miles away are the hills of Pra-Bat—holy foot—where the impression of Buddha's foot, with some of the mystical signs, was discovered in 1602, and which since then has formed a sacred object of pilgrimage.

"We must get there somehow," I exclaimed, looking at the nearer wats.

"I knew it! Really, Helen, can't you leave one unfortunate wat alone? They are all precisely alike, and I am through with them." Gyp's tone was emphatic.

"There is a big Buddha there, and inside him

THE PATIENT TILLERS OF THE SOIL.

AYUTHIA.

you can find little Buddhas. I want to find one. Ask Mr. Perry if that is not so."

I thought to arouse Gyp's cupidity, but no, I had them all against me. The distance grew, the pathway became denser, the chance of snakes a certainty, the Buddhas worth nothing, and most culpable to pocket them.

"What did we come for if we aren't to see anything?" I groaned.

"You have seen a prisoner with chains on—what do you want more?" from Gyp.

"You have climbed the tower——" from Mr. Perry.

"And you are going to the place of the elephant hunt; we can get there in a sampan," from Mr. Rogers.

"And here is one of your 'darker brethren' come to conduct us. I feel too hot to be civil, so shall hand him on to you." This from Jim.

Cousin Mary protested that she could see enough of Ayuthia from the deck of the *Lotus*. It was charming from that vantage point, and she would reserve herself for the Chinese palace at Bang-pa-in.

Every man among them, except the slim little Siamese Nai Kem, offered, almost anxiously, to accompany Cousin Mary and take care of her, such was the effect of her bad example; but she was very firm about their duty, and said a grandmother had privileges.

"I should take a house-boat on the Thames," jeered Gyp, "and not come right the other side of the world to stick on a most English steam launch!"

But Cousin Mary said "Good-bye" cheerfully, and marched off with the "boy" under a big green umbrella, while we pursued the hot path of duty. The sampan had done it really; Cousin Mary confessed as much to me in the quiet of the night hours. They are rickety, unless you sit good and still, and Gyp does not remember this for very long.

I had read in the Books of Information about the elephant hunts, and how the decoys are sent out into the jungle to bring in the unsuspecting free beasts. I wonder if they paint the life of labour as attractive—it seems rather mean of them; but the capture must be an interesting sight from the secure position of the stand, and to some of the crowding populace there is also the excitement of a little danger. The huge beasts, finding themselves trapped in the enclosure, make for the gates; and they have to be strong indeed to stand the onslaught.

On the occasion of an important visitor a hunt is always arranged, but we, alas! saw only the quiet arena and some pacific beasts in their shed. Jim had tales to tell of their intelligence among the teak—"elephants a-piling teak"—but even in that department machinery is beginning to oust nature's clumsier methods. The poor elephant may soon be amongst the unemployed.

I tried to follow Jim's instructions and make myself pleasant to Nai Kem, but the heat and his limited vocabulary were against it. He had learnt what he knew in the Roman Catholic school in Bangkok, and was distinctly proud of the possession.

"Then you became a Roman Catholic?" I asked.

"No—no. I listened. I learnt, but I Buddhist, Buddhist in Siam."

He has doubtless been reckoned with the converts in a missionary report.

The American and R.C. work is, however, not wasted by any means; all the Siamese youths cannot come to Europe.

Our sampan took us down the klong, out into the river, past the big floating stores of vegetables, grains, and such fascinating big brass bowls and pitchers that Gyp nearly upset the sampan in her anxiety to get at them. Jim "managed" her. He told her of a coming sale of Bangkok china which

would absorb all her ticals and also be portable. So Gyp's attention was diverted.

Cousin Mary was sipping lime squash—it is better than lemonade, and here there are no lemons to be had—and the boy had it ready, and "Stingers" for degenerate palates, with ice bobbling in it—blessed boy!

We reposed on the high deck of the *Lotus*, and steamed down the river to Bang-pa-in, meeting all the air that was moving, and so being freed from the perpetual plague of the mosquito.

I have never wanted to possess a palace before, but this gift of the Chinese of Bangkok to the Siamese King filled me with the greenest of envy.

Words can but mislead; one might as well describe a Liberty shop: but there everything was in its place, ready for use, brought together with intention, and everything breathed the East, the East as it can do things when left quite alone—and, all honour to China, everything there was Chinese.

The Chinese in Bangkok are a considerable number, as we have had occasion to remark, and the flourishing condition of some of those Chinese was here manifested. They have some important monopolies—opium among the number—but their present to the King should only stand for a very graceful act.

The other summer palace, a few paces off, evidently appealed more to the taste of Nai Kem. I wondered sadly if that were significant of Siam. It is in the worst style of Tottenham Court Road, appalling in its pretension and veneer.

I escaped into the garden. It held both "palaces," and at a respectful distance some humbler abodes. To one of these we were conducted, and shown our rooms for the night. The whole of the lower floor was divided by a wall that did not quite reach the high ceiling, and in each division were three beds and one tiny dressing-table. Gyp discovered

tooth brushes, and could not get over this sign of thoughtfulness.

"We must none of us snore," remarked Cousin Mary.

We dined on the *Lotus*. What a dinner that "boy" managed to give us, and how hungry everybody was!

The moon was perfect afterwards, and the lake by the Chinese palace, with a central Chinese pagoda used for bathing, looked very inviting.

Gyp was ready to take Mr. Perry's bet for a swimming match, but the men had that to themselves next morning. Gyp's elegant costume was not to hand. We had a splendid splashing bath—a marble platform, and a tank of water adjoined our division—and it was beautifully cold.

The next day was spent placidly sailing down the Menam; passing little homesteads that suggested a farm, and cottages on rafters or on poles half in half out the river. Sometimes the banks were beautiful with bamboos and all the jungle greenery, sometimes almost bare, and the eye was carried over miles of brown swampy land ready for the coming rice, which would soon be sown or planted out. Here and there the frightening horns of the buffalo, the patient tiller of the soil in these parts, were raised from the muddy banks in inquiry, and the white paddy-bird made a comfortable seat of his broad back, or formed a circle round him, sitting straight up like so many little posts.

Occasionally we caught sight of a beautiful white and black bird of long pointed wings, like a very magnified water-wagtail; also a big black bird barred with blue made one long to commit murder. They don't know, these happy Siamese birds, that in civilised lands we should take their wings to adorn our heads.

We landed for fun at one prosperous-looking little rice farm. Jim had had dealings with the man, and Mr. Perry's Siamese made us welcome visitors.

A Busy Klong.

The Old Lady's Family.

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The sampan, and planks of the shakiest description, landed us in a rather swampy little yard, but the centre was beaten into something like hardness, and there the rice was being threshed out by the buffaloes' hoofs as they trod round and round, and piles of golden grain and stacks of golden straw, and the nice clean smell, reminded one of farmyards far away.

We were objects of great interest to the master and men and women and children who sprang up from everywhere, and our clothes were much investigated. It is probable that we were the first white women who had come their way. The panung was the only garment they indulged in. The king's sumptuary law does not touch "up country." Life is there simplified considerably: no tailor's bills, no shoemaker's, no coals; the fish are in the river, the satisfying banana almost drops into their hands, the rice fails not, why should they strive and hurry and want dozens of useless things because the "farangs" come and set them a bad example? I do wish the East would begin converting the West, we need it so badly.

We landed once again to be shown off to a friend of Mr. Rogers'. She was a scantily clad, very brown and wrinkled old lady, who kept a school and a wat for some priests. She lived in a kind of rabbit warren of brown planks, and when I took out my camera, from every nook and corner sprang up brown folks, and squatted so as to get into the picture. Gyp and I sat beside her on a bench, and while saying polite things through our interpreter, she calmly examined us, and undid the buttons of our blouses, which fastened at the back. I think it was her first introduction to the button! In the small garden, or wilderness of klong and trees and pagodas that overhung the river, we tried a selection of priests for a photograph, but it was no use

selecting: they crowded round, none wished to be omitted, and their brown patroness was most keen on having them all equally honoured. They made a beautiful study, but it needed colour to give the effect of those yellow-toned robes amidst the greenery, and the slender brown bridge over the brown klong. It is one of the regrets of my life that something happened to that exposure, and the priests were disappointed. I sent the old lady what I could, but I know she had hoped for the yellow robes.

It is only lately the Siamese have permitted themselves to be photographed. The King and, I think, sixteen of his sons, were represented in a big group, and after that Bangkok decided there were no evil effects to be anticipated from the performances of the picture-box, and now they are as anxious to be taken as a fashionable beauty.

We were soon again in the busy traffic of the Menam: higher up the broad river was peaceful, only occasional rafts of the giant trunks of teak floated calmly down, or long winding processions of rice-boats, returning empty, lazily wended their way up stream, with a busy snorting little tug doing all the work; but nearer Bangkok all the launches and lighters and sampans and canoes and house-boats and rice-boats made the stream as busy as Piccadilly, and after ten hours' journey we landed at our own garden.

"Don't I manage my Gyp well?" said Jim to me as we parted for the night.

I seemed to see so little of Jim these days; no more evening drives in the afterglow. Of course we had to divide otherwise.

I stood by my window, and the pictures of the two days up the river passed before me. Jim had "managed Gyp," had he? Or was Gyp—— And then I told myself I was tired—and an idiot likewise—and went to bed.

CHAPTER VII

GYP DECIDES

I LIKE to believe that everything comes to him who waits, it makes one so hopeful for the future. Shortly after our return from Ayuthia two long-expecteds made their appearance. One was some much-desired fighting fish, four beauties in four glass bottles; and the other was an invitation to a cremation through the faithful German Baron.

What a fortune Jim would make if he turned his attention from teak to the Bangkok fighting fish! It is a little beauty, about the size of a small gold-fish and rather thicker in figure; its head it has copied from the Spanish bull-dog. Oh, such a jaw! and through the almost translucent body quiver all the colours of the rainbow. When he and his foe confront one another by being placed in the same bowl, his body swells visibly, and all the coursing colours of his blood grow more and more brilliant as his rage increases. Round and round each other they swim, for all the world like prize-fighters, and then they close, that deadly underjaw clutches the enemy's underjaw, and so they hang on until one collapses. Just like the wrestlers at North country "games," who grip one another in seemingly quiet tension, until one gives in, and it is over. One little fish "gives in," and sinks to the bottom. He is not dead, however, and the victor should be quickly scooped up and returned to his own bowl.

Gyp fell wildly in love with the fish, and even Cousin Mary, who at first would not hear of a fight, condemning the whole thing and being strongly backed up by Jim out of sheer perversity, even Cousin Mary drew near the absorbed group.

"Well, what is it? Helen, how can you be so cruel! Don't they kill each other really? There, that poor little thing has sunk to the bottom, he might very well be dead."

"He might," quoth Jim, "he sometimes is; but Helen would enjoy a gory bull-fight. Come away. I can't have my Gyp demoralised."

"Oh, don't, Jim! Get us out another, quick! I never saw anything like their colours as they swell up with rage. What little beauties! Why have you kept them dark all this time? Mother, you are taking up all the room, and then pretending you are too merciful to like it. Jim, I bet you two to one on this fish, the one near me. Will you take me in ticals?"

"There!" cried Jim, "now we see the open door of the downward path! Betting, gambling——"

"Sedition, murder, sudden death," went on Gyp. "Quick, Jim, or you lose the chance. Oh, what jaws they have, what a grip! There, Jim; my man swims on top—pay up!"

Jim was told to be in time for the cremation, and then allowed to go back to his office. Gyp gives him orders now, and Jim has reversed his method of management, and himself sets the example of "giving in" in little things. I also notice he now says "my Gyp" instead of "your Gyp."

Cousin Mary could hardly be persuaded to come to the cremation. She sat under the big punkah, supplementing it with a tiny fan, and wondered at me.

"You will want to take me to Woking when we get home, Helen. I can't understand this thirst

for horrors. Why should I go to other people's funerals? I don't think it very good taste."

"But it isn't horrors. You will see nothing horrid. It is a curious ceremony, and the people have been dead so long it is hardly like a funeral. And it is considered polite to go—of course we must dress in mourning."

"Oh, I can't wear black—that is out of the question," and Gyp chimed in, "Helen! what a hot idea."

"No, white is the right colour, and a black hat will be all that is necessary. Cousin Mary, that very gown you have on will do, a soft grey. You will be sorry afterwards if you don't come to something so typically Siamese."

"Mother is quite forgetting all the improving things she wants to tell her pet 'Mrs. Grundy.' Mrs. Lawson will love to hear of these heathen works of darkness, Mummie. Fact is, Helen, the climate is too much for her. She sits and gasps all day like a fish out of water, all the starch is gone, and even you can't make her rise to anything. After the races we must go. I can't take home anything so limp in mind and body as this poor thing is becoming."

"Helen," exclaimed Cousin Mary almost angrily, and ignoring her daughter's friendly pat on the shoulders, "what are you made of? Don't you feel absolutely good for nothing and indifferent to everything?"

"I am not indifferent, only melting. But, Cousin Mary, don't give in just yet, we are leaving so soon."

I did not guess how soon.

I was very glad Eastern fashion only demanded white, and we were ready when Baron von Gulden came for us in the afternoon.

We drove to one of the royal wats—a certain

number are considered royal—and Wat Thepis-rindr is used for the cremation of lesser royalties; anyone of greater importance has a special erection on the Pramane ground.

This was after all quite a sad ceremony, for the little princess to be cremated and her newly born babe had both died but a few weeks ago, and in such cases the ceremony is not long deferred. She was one of the many nieces and also a daughter-in-law of the King's, so a great many of the royalties were present. The body in its upright coffin—it is placed in a kneeling position when being prepared for cremation—was enclosed in a grand gilt case, and had been brought to the wat the previous day with much state and ceremony. This was the day for the cremation itself.

All the quiet, contented crowd of Bangkok seemed to be collected round the wat enclosure, though not allowed in the inner circle; but cremations are public ceremonies, and Bangkok comes to be amused and entertained. Various open-air theatres and booths and stalls surround the grounds, and it is only in the wat building that one becomes aware that something of a tragic nature is taking place.

The friends and relations were all in white or black; one noticed with regret that black was evidently the most correct for the men, and a black panung and black coat and shoes and stockings certainly give an effect of the deepest gloom. The King and the widower and many of the little princesses were all thus attired; some of the little girls who had not yet had their hair cut, nor taken to the betel-nut to any extent, were very intelligent and attractive looking.

In the outer courts and stands, erected for the occasion, various light refreshments were provided, and chairs and tables. People moved about and met their friends and talked, but in a subdued

manner. Two "farangs" who had on coloured ties were requested to withdraw, and I never saw two more disconcerted men; the ceremonies are beginning to be held with much greater strictness than in former days.

I met Mr. Alexander Binks in a more than ordinarily shiny black coat, and a big white bow supported his chin and gave him the look of a dissenting minister.

"Come and say 'how do' to my wife," and though I had no wish to do so, I was walked off. The good lady made one simply boil on sight, for she had struggled into not only a very tight-fitting black silk dress, but a pair of black kid gloves. In Bangkok that is a really heroic act; we generally carry our gloves in our hands.

She greeted me with a subdued but chilling manner.

"I told you, Miss Carteret, that I was 'home' on Toosdays, but I found your cards left of a Thursday. Of course, if——"

I interrupted to apologise—we had been up to Ayuthia and had had so many engagements, I so regretted——

Mr. Binks helped me out.

"No offence meant, Mawree,"—the lady's name was Marie,—"I guess Miss Carteret can't hold on to all the 'at home' days."

"It is on my cards, Alexander."

"Dessay she's gotten a pretty heap to look through. She'll come next Toosday, and bring her friends along."

And I said I would eagerly. I never knew anything like those Binkses—I should end by going there every "Toosday" if I stayed on in Bangkok.

Everyone had been presented with a few pieces of sandalwood, long sticks, split and curled; as I laid mine down on a table Mr. Binks said sternly—

"Take that up—you'll want it directly, for the burning. Come along, Mawree; let's get into line."

There was a general move, for the King had arrived.

Chulalongkorn is a small, well-made man who carries his fifty odd years well. He is a very good-looking Siamese, with an intelligent, earnest face, and though it is told that at one time "slackness" overcame him, the record of his reign will not be one to be ashamed of. The strenuous life of the West is not one easily adopted by an Eastern potentate, and that the West forces it on the East, making the pie for their own busy fingers to dip into, cannot be regarded as wholly a blessing from the Eastern point of view. And now Japan is there—Japan that is of the East, whose fingers are Oriental though energetic—can we wonder if the East looks to Japan?

Chulalongkorn led the way, followed by princes and phras and princesses and moms, all carrying little bundles of ornamented sandalwood, and the yellow-robed priests formed into a squatting line, and the King presented each with a new yellow robe. They chanted the ritual after the manner of priests, and solemnly the procession, single file, ascended some narrow steps that led to a small platform of temporary erection, where the vase-like coffin was placed, and under it was the fire, into which everyone threw their little bundle of wood with, doubtless, a prayer for the soul that had sped.

I saw a look of agony on Cousin Mary's face some way behind me, but there was no escape,—we were in the line,—and I also noticed Mr. Binks the younger kindly and firmly seize her arm and guide her up the steps. She had to assist at that cremation.

I came down the steps the other side very awe-full, and feeling strongly that though the East

kindly recognises only a compliment in the stranger's presence, none but a friend's hand should offer the sandalwood for the burning.

When all had passed before the pyre there was a general move to the outside of the wat, for the King was throwing presents among the crowd. Small coins concealed in limes cause great excitement, and are what the people look for on these occasions, and apparently sometimes presents of silver or sandalwood boxes are given to the other guests. But I felt glad we had no presents.

On our return Gyp announced her intention of being cremated, and began giving her mother the necessary instructions.

"Don't bother," said Cousin Mary, "I shan't be there. You must leave instructions with your husband."

"Oh, but I intend to be a widow; one must have every experience."

Baron von Gulden laughed. "You schall marry mit an old gentlemans then, Mees Gyp; you schall be von fascinating vidow lady. After that ve cremate you—yes?"

"Oh, he need not be so very old; about Jim's age would do. And anyway, in these days one can always be divorced."

"Ach du lieber Himmel! but zis young lady makes fonny jokes!"

"Yes, Baron, she is a funny girl; but I think she is trying to shock you. She knows that her Mother and I are quite beyond that possibility. Her bark——"

"Don't boast, Helen—perhaps I can bite." And Gyp flung her gloves, which she had rolled into a tight ball, right at me.

Jim came up the verandah steps just at that moment and caught the gloves. "Is this a challenge? Oh, Gyp, behold I take it up for my

little sister! You must fight with someone your own size."

Jim was very distrait all that evening, and though he kept the Baron to dinner, and chaffed Gyp, and struggled with himself, he conveyed to me, unintentionally, a sense of impending calamity.

I managed to ask him if he were feeling all right, and his answer astonished me.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't talk of health, Nell, just go on. Keep the ball rolling, and don't ask questions."

The next morning he came into my room.

"Well, I must tell you, but perhaps you had better keep it from the others, or use your discretion; but that poor fellow Woods was down with cholera yesterday—he died last night. I must go to the funeral this evening, and I have just heard Fletcher —the man he lives with, you know—is in for it."

"Jim! Oh, Jim!"

"He may get over it, of course, but I think he was in a mortal funk, poor chap, and knew he'd die when Woods went."

"But, Jim, is there any reason?"

Jim shrugged his shoulders. "The usual reasons, I suppose, but Europeans don't often catch it. Milk, fruit, one never knows. Look here, don't talk about it, and just go on as usual; and if anyone begins to imagine any symptoms, you give them a rattling good dose of castor oil, just at once. You will find it in my room."

"Jim, how awful it is! One can't realise anything so sudden."

"Don't try to realise. It's no use. I wonder if Cousin Mary will be nervous? Gyp won't—she is absolutely without fear, I should say. But I tell you when a thing happens like this some people, men too, lose their nerve astoundingly. Look here, Perry and Rogers are coming this afternoon to go

to that sale of china. I can't go—you need not say why—but they are not obliged to attend, Rogers hardly knew the poor fellow. You must take Gyp and Cousin Mary. Good-bye; and if you think it better not to tell them—yet—why don't."

Jim hurried off—the world and its business were still moving, the daily round, the common task had still to be performed; only for one quiet, still figure it was finished, and in a few more hours even that straight white form would be put out of sight, and all the busy world would soon forget. It happened every day to someone, soon it might be one's own turn; but suddenly, like this, a bolt from the blue, it took away one's breath, and involuntarily one wondered, "Who next?"

I knew Cousin Mary; nervous in the way Jim meant she certainly was not. She thought first of the poor mother, the dreadful telegram that must convey the short and terrible message, and then she said—

"Helen, I think there is no need to tell Gyp, is there? You know she is very young, and I have noticed before death appals her. It is not to be wondered at, she is so alive."

So the hot morning, with this sudden cloud over the brilliant sunshine, was lived through in ordinary fashion, and in the afternoon Gyp and I went to the sale with Mr. Rogers, and met Mr. Perry there.

It was a very good small collection of Bangkok china, and the Norwegian who had made it was returning home and not taking his Penates with him. Before I knew it I was possessed of a very good-sized Buddha, and Gyp was bidding wildly for one that would be best suited to a temple. We soon found, when it came to the fascinating Siamese pots and vases, that we were running each other up, and as the room was filling, we formed a syndicate, and

under the direction of Mr. Rogers bought in what we any of us wanted. Gyp's nods, however, were not to be controlled.

"But I do want it so much—and Mr. Rogers never noticed that Mrs. Dashwood had come in and was signalling away to the auctioneer," she remonstrated.

"Gyp, we can't buy everything."

"We shall regret it all our lives if we don't. Here, look at those lotus pots, three of them—what is Mr. Rogers doing? Helen, I don't care if I haven't a cent left, I am going to buy them. Oh, this syndicate is insane, and who will get them finally?"

"That," said Mr. Perry, "is going to be the diversion afterwards, Miss Gresham. We will have a rare knock-out."

Mrs. Dashwood edged her way through to me.

"Oh, my dear, isn't it appalling! I suppose your brother has gone——"

Mr. Perry caught my eye, and Gyp was walked off to examine a more transportable Buddha.

"Haven't you told her? Oh, you will have to. That other poor fellow is very bad, you know. One wonders who next? I have gone through so many scares, I am a complete fatalist. It is funny the way it takes people! That delicate little Mrs. Mills is making arrangements to take off her big husband right away, he is so nervous he won't eat a thing,—he can't help it, and it is the worst state,—so she is protesting that she must have a change, and she will go down to Singapore on a rice-boat, and get a steamer there to anywhere—Ceylon or Japan—but away! She is quite right. If Ted gets in a fright I am off at once."

"Is Mr. Fletcher worse?"

Mrs. Dashwood shrugged her shoulders.

"No one is in suspense very long in these cases.

It is the exhaustion afterwards that does for so many. Where is Mrs. Gresham? Not here? Frightened?"

"Not in the least—excepting for Gyp."

"That's maternal, I suppose. But Miss Gyp is quite a cool hand. No nerves about her."

"I don't know."

"Well, you are all coming in this evening, aren't you? Don't let your brother back out. A funeral is a very depressing thing, and I shall need to keep up Ted's spirits. Poor old thing, he had to go too, and it's so awfully sudden. A man you dined with the night before!"

Jim was talking with Cousin Mary when we got back, and I was glad that we all dined with the Dashwoods. Her bright, incessant talk and cheery common sense revived everyone, and the concentration required by bridge was a good tonic.

They had just erected what Mrs. Dashwood called a "meat safe" on their verandah. It held but one table for four, and inside its fine wire walls that blissful four were free from the devouring mosquito. We were eight, and took it in turn to sit in safety.

I opened my eyes next morning on Jim's pink-pyjama'd figure sitting on my bed.

"Nell, Fletcher is gone too; and Rubino—you don't know him—is down. Cousin Mary seemed to think Gyp might be nervous. Do you think so too?"

"I can't say, Jim; but she is so strong and healthy, and——"

"Oh, that's nothing," interrupted Jim. "Look here, you had better go—all of you. No, I'm not going to take any risks. It's getting very hot, and will only get hotter, and Cousin Mary is beginning to feel it badly."

"*She* is not afraid. You see she thinks of someone else at once."

"Yes, that's all very well; but this place has tried her a good deal, and after all, you know, you must go soon if you want to be in Japan by April."

"Oh, Jim, I didn't want to leave for another fortnight. But—could you come too?"

Jim paused, until I began to hope.

"No, I can't," he said decidedly. "I am sending Mills away. His wife——"

"Ah! I know."

"Well, we will *call* it his wife; she won't mind. And Brooks is away, so that fixes me here until he returns, which probably means the autumn. But I will have a talk with Gyp and Cousin Mary. You can't wait for the *Simla*. I don't know when she will be up."

"Jim, I can't and won't go in the *Nam-Po*!"

"My dear, you may have to do worse. The *Nam-Po* is a very good boat."

Oh dear! the world seemed suddenly going the wrong way; but Cousin Mary, when I spoke of it to her, said she thought Jim was quite right, and, after all, what was a fortnight?

And Gyp left me no choice. She came in from her talk with Jim at tiffin time pale and determined.

Jim was to do his best for us at once—berths in any small steamer going to either Singapore or Hong-Kong. We were to pack and prepare to leave whenever anything was ready to start. Stay on?—what for? Where was the sense? It was getting hotter and hotter day by day; could I not see that her mother was getting more and more washed out? What was there to stay for?—more wats? or that padouk avenue? Well, it was high time we went; and Jim quite agreed with her.

Not a word of the cholera; Gyp never mentioned it, and she asked no questions. In a fright?—oh dear, no! Gyp's head was held high, but we were to go, that was all; and I could think of no reason

why we should not, though I felt as though I were being uprooted, and was too slack to resist.

Sap was kept very busy. Jim's boy was invaluable, and looked quite sad; Kim Hee had a suppressed air of triumph that tried me; but the butler said—

"Missee going too? Oh, my velly solly."

The grey ponies tore round, and I left regretful cards, and one last drive I took with Jim. Down the Goose Road where the bare boughs had been the green lacery of leaves had opened some little time back, but this evening, in answer to my wish, the yellow bloom burst, and a golden glory showered down sweet scent to us as we drove beneath its arch.

Once more the afterglow warmed for us two, and the glittering line of klong flushed back the answer, and then all sank into the still, dark night.

Jim arranged everything, and in two days' time we were on board the *Loo Sok*, a sturdy steamer of some 1400 tons, laden with rice for Hong-Kong and captained by a smart-looking young German, who consented to three lady passengers with affable bows, gave up his big cabin, assured Jim of his greatest care, and made us feel that the *Simla* was quite an unnecessary luxury to long for.

I was in too much of a whirl and a dream to ask any questions. I was being done for—by Gyp of the white face and firm mouth, and Jim of the calm manner and anxious eyes.

"I shall miss you," said Jim to me, looking at Gyp's tall white figure as she leant over the rails of the ship making very particular adieux to Mr. Perry. "But I am sure you ought to go; if anything happened to Gyp—or any of you—she quite thought it best to go, and she knows her own mind in a way that is very rare with women." Jim had begun generalising about women. I think men always do when they are singling out one individual for special analysis.

I suppose my eyes shot up an inquiry.

Jim laughed shortly. "Oh, my dear Nell, don't you worry; that's all right. But your Gyp"—Oh! mine again now!—"has a way with her! *Quite* as well she turned her attention from poor boy Perry—though it doesn't hurt a man of that age, does him good; and one gets very few opportunities in this out-of-the-world—inferno." Jim said this last word with sudden bitterness. I felt my heart tighten.

"Oh, Jim, do get away from it, do come home! Let us take a farm, or have a jam factory. Making money is such a small part of life."

"Haven't you liked it—the place, I mean?"

"I! Oh yes—the grey old skies of England aren't calling me; but the East will call, I know that."

"Exactly. Don't worry about me. It comes over one occasionally, that's all. I will make my pile, and then come and spend it farming in the old country!" Jim laughed, and Gyp came up to me.

"Said your 'good-byes,' Helen? Now it is my turn. Jim, you are one of the nicest hosts in the world. I've had a ripping time. And mind, Jim, you have promised to join us in America and come home that way. I'll look after Helen till you catch us up. Goodness me! who on earth is coming on board? Helen, it's your bosom friend, Alexander!"

I turned to Mr. Perry and the railing, and left them together.

A small and closely packed launch was alongside, and Mr. Binks was receiving the passengers at the foot of the steps.

"Come along, marm; I knew we should catch her. Yes, this is the *Loo Sok*, and we sail soon as ever I've gotten you all aboard. Right you are. Now, captain, I've brought you some more passengers, and you can put up with us as far as Koh-si-chang,

I guess. Hallo, Carteret! you off too? Land's sake, but there's the lot of you!"

Only as far as Koh-si-chang, thank Heaven! was my silent thanksgiving, for we and the rice were bound for Hong-Kong.

The poor little *Loo Sok* was overcrowded, but this sudden exodus to Koh-si-chang only meant one night's discomfort.

The Dashwoods' launch was alongside now, and everyone we knew seemed aboard; they were laughing and chaffing, "making a bolt for it," "leaving us to our fate," "I will cheer Jim up,"—the voices were all singing in my ears,—and then some bell rang, and the voices, still laughing and joking, were hurrying down the narrow steps, and then we were waving to an indistinct group of white figures in a diminishing boat, and it seemed like a far-off echo from a dream when Mr. Binks said—

"Nice fellow, Cateret; head screwed on straight, he has."

So it was Good-bye to Bangkok—to the pattering brown feet of Sap, to the regretful, respectful salaam of Jim's boy, and to the lean brown arms that implored the "presence's" favour of the mallee; to Kim Hee's half-scornful chuckle as he pocketed his tip and said, "Goo'-bye, missee"; to the butler's enigmatic smile and "Missee coming back one day, my thinking"; to the garden I loved, and the grey ponies so swift of foot, and to the sice with his cheerful grin; to the rattling streets, the creaking bridges, the long brown klongs, and last, the towering glittering spiral of Wat Chang. We were moving away from it all, white palaces and brown huts; the river was turning, among all the queer shipping we were threading our way, hooting shrilly, slowly drifting, downward, seaward, away—away.

"Come to tea," said Gyp.

Gyp still held the reins of government, but the

lines of firmness had relaxed; she was affable to Mr. Binks, and to the two Danish ladies he had helped on board, with maids and babies and luggage, and for the first time she mentioned the cholera.

"Did that other man die, Mr. Binks?"

Mr. Binks nodded, and Gyp shuddered; then I noticed Mr. Binks was as anxious to avoid the subject as Gyp, but in the evening something seemed to impel him to account for himself to me. Beds were being made up on every spare tressel or long chair, and several men whom we could not yet account for were shyly helping and trying to obliterate themselves as much as Mr. Binks' occasional orders would allow. Then, as I leant over the railing and regretfully watched the quaint curved roof of the Prachadi Klang-nam, my first and my last wat, he joined me.

"Miss Hellurn,"—of course Mr. Binks must take liberties with everyone's name,—"I want to explain to you that I am not running away from that—that blasted cholera. No, sir. Mawree, my wife, is below par, and has gotten a whim in her head to spend some weeks at Koh-si-chang. Now, I 'ud as soon pass some weeks in Hades as in Koh-si-chang, but I never deny my wife any mortal thing that this God-forsaken land will allow me to get her. So when she asked me to go and see if an empty bungalow was to be had down there, why, I made for the first boat that was sailing, and here I am to fix it up if possible. Mrs. Fricker and her sister and family have already a villa prepared for them, and I put up with them for a day or two, and then return to fetch my wife. She is a wonderful woman is my wife," he added meditatively.

I began to fancy that many women were wonderful, and I hoped all the husbands recognised it in their hearts, if not with their lips. I did not much believe that Mrs. Mawree Binks was dying for the

discomforts of Koh-si-chang, but I was quite sure it was an excellent "way out" for the mighty Alexander.

Outside the bar, and in the opening of the Siamese Gulf, lies the small island of Koh-si-chang, the only little attempt at a seaside place that Siam offers as an outlet from the heat of Bangkok. Here some few wooden bungalows have been erected, and are generally left in an absolutely deserted and maybe tumbled-down condition until some European arranges to take one of them for a month or so, and with bag, baggage, and bedding, and all the necessaries of life, comes to make the best of the bare walls and empty verandahs. Koh-si-chang provides nothing else, except maybe some fish from the sea; but it is a change, and the night breezes are cooler and carry some refreshment on their wings.

Mr. Binks' Emporium, and the possibilities offered by a launch or lighter to bring down weekly provisions for all the inhabitants, began to fill his horizon. "Mawree's" prescription was working. He went to bed, or rather to his long chair, that night—the best cabin was not for him this time—almost convinced that it was a good business proposition that he was dealing with, and that neither "Mawree's" whims nor cholera scare had anything to do with his journey.

For two nights we lay off the uninviting coast of that almost deserted little island, impatiently waiting and longing for the Chinese lighters which delayed their coming, and without which the little *Loo Sok* could not start with her full complement of rice; for the bar effectually prevents a ship of any draught from going up or down the Menam.

How inconvenient! and why don't they clear the mouth of the river, these unenterprising Siamese?

"For the same reason," the rather grim Minister of the Interior is accredited with answering, "for the same reason that the English object to the Channel Tunnel." And I, were I Chulalongkorn, would certainly keep, and raise, every bar I knew of that prevented the too easy access of those busy, interfering farangs up my beautiful Menam. It was really broad-minded of me to feel like that during this weary wait, while the "yellow Johnnies" were amusing themselves with fire-crackers and joss-sticks instead of bringing us our rice.

We went on shore. Cousin Mary, after studying the ladder and the sampan and the agitated billows, said she preferred staying on deck talking to the nice German captain; but Gyp roused me from what she called "sluggish torpor," and dragged me off to see how the Danish ladies were fixing up their bungalow, and to have tea with the Davises, whom I had met in Bangkok, and who sent us an invitation *vid* Mr. Binks. They had been in retreat at Koh-si-chang for some weeks.

The plain little wooden houses with deep verandahs are pitched down in a clearing of jungle near the flat beach. A garden is a hopeless luxury to long for, and even the inhabited bungalows look melancholy and deserted. Fru Fricker and her sturdy sister were found in a mêlée of half-opened packing-cases, mattresses on floor, cane chairs, strips of curtains, saucepans and pails—it was an agitated chaos, and their Siamese servants seemed to be enjoying themselves. The ladies were very hot. It would all come right in time, but it is a desperate initiation to a holiday.

Mr. Binks had quartered himself on the Davises. It was a more cheerful scene. The walls were swept and garnished, red Turkey twill hung as window curtains. Packing-cases had been converted into

dressing-tables, pots and pans hung on the walls, and a shed outside held the kitchen fire. Long chairs and cushions and little folding tables made the verandah possible, and Mr. Binks felt "Mawree" would soon be comfortable, chaos would vanish before her methodical orders, and the "Emporium" should send of its best canned goods and latest literature. He had fixed on a small house near, and Thackeray was to bathe every day.

Mr. Davis, who was recovering from fever, was on leave from his department, the educational one. He lay, pale and reflective, on the verandah, and one connected him more easily with a school of little white boys taking their two-and-two walks at some English seaside resort, than wrestling with young Siam and the princes and phras who block most innovations, even when they come at their own request.

He showed us the overgrown foundations of a big summer palace the King had once contemplated building at Koh-si-chang, and told us how, after the French trouble in 1893, he had lost his partiality for the mouth of the Menam.

That must have been an exciting time—but it reads more like a comic-opera battle than a serious engagement between two serious powers. Thinking of the absolute unpreparedness of the Siamese and their own surprise when the guns really did go off and they hit a French vessel, I asked if anyone in Bangkok had been alarmed over the situation, if it had not been taken as a joke?—by the Europeans, of course,—and Mr. Davis looked suddenly grave.

"Ah, it was not the French who were alarming to us, but had they really bombarded the King's palace, as was possible, there would have been a general rising of the Chinese over the whole of Bangkok, and general looting, and the thought of that was serious. It is better not to fall into the

hands of excited Chinamen. We prepared for this possibility as best we could, but one's compound does not lend itself easily to defensive purposes. I was certainly glad when the smoke cleared away. But it was a bitter climb down for the Siamese. It did the King a lot of harm."

"He thought we failed him, I suppose?"

"We did not want war with France, after all."

"We don't play the bluffing game with any assurance, do we?" I suggested. "I wonder if we are too honest or too stupid?"

"Or too ignorant," said Mr. Davis. "How many people in England know where Bangkok is? Why should they even pretend to fight for any Siamese interest? It is all so far away."

"And I quite agree," broke in Gyp, having heard the last sentence. "I would make a handsome present to France of the whole blooming country—wats and moms and all."

"We have to think of Burmah and India—and trade——"

"Oh, bother!" said Gyp. "We can't keep the whole world as a barrier to India. But I would have bluffed France, just for the joke of the thing."

"I feel we ought to look after Siam," I said reflectively.

"How nice and motherly of you!" jeered Gyp. "But you'd let the dear Germans in if they promised to be good and kissed your hand prettily."

Mr. Davis smiled. "Are you a Free Trader, Miss Gresham?"

"A Free Trader?" Gyp looked doubtful. "Am I, Helen?"

"I don't think you have yet given your undivided attention to that particular subject."

"That's it. My mind is open. But I think the 'open door' is utter rot when other people don't open theirs," summed up Gyp. "But, Helen, to talk a

little common sense, have you noticed the sea? It's horribly rough, and we have to get back to that tuppenny-halfpenny cockle-shell all the way out there, and how are we to do it? If it gets rougher, we can't—so come at once."

With our good-bye to the Davises the last link with Siam seemed severed. He helped us into a most unsafe little craft that bobbed up and down through the waves, but finally did reach the *Loo Sok*, and we scrambled up to the deck with the help of a ladder of ropes. I never did anything so precarious in my life. There we found Cousin Mary, not so much grateful for our safe return, as delighted that she had not accompanied us. Gyp told her she was shocked by her egotism—a quality only permissible in the young.

The next morning the Chinese lighters had finished with us, and lazily their delightful rush-woven sails took them back to Bangkok. I sent vain regrets with them, and a thick letter to Jim. Gyp enclosed two lines; she folded them tightly, and then opened the paper and laid it before me.

"DEAR OLD JIM,—I miss you horribly. We are all bored to death, and there are only three Commercial Travellers coming on to Hong-Kong. No good bridge possible. Write to your dear little coz.

"GYP."

I looked up at her. "Well, that has not taken you long."

"And you have written reams! Dreadfully troublesome to read in this heat. You know you have just gone on telling him to boil the water, to use tinned milk, not to eat fruit and——"

"Oh, *have* I?"

"Well, Nell, I hope you are going to cheer up. You seem sort of dazed and foozled. One would really think——"

I cut her short. "But so I am. I have left everything unfinished. I keep on thinking of all I wanted to do. There was the mom——"

"Oh, heavens! Helen, drop the moms and the phras and the wats and the klongs, and begin to think of Japan. Mother has got out the worthy Murray; you study him. There's cherry blossom ahead of us! that ought to console you for every mom in the country. To tell you the truth, I have had quite enough of your old Siam. It's awfully enervating. Good-bye to it. I don't care if I never see a wat or a mom again. 'Good-bye for ever! Good-bye,'" sang Gyp.

Gyp broke some cord that was drawing me back up the broad shining Menam when she said "cherry blossom." I woke up. Cherry blossom and Japan! Oh, how good the world was! I fetched the familiar Murray and Lafcadio Hearn's *Unfamiliar Japan*, and I was soon farther away than the throbbing wheel of the *Loo Sok* had taken us.

We settled into a most quiet routine for the next seven days. Monsoons, both east and west, left us in calm peace; the sun shone by day, the stars by night; a sufficient breeze kept us cooler than we had dreamed of being for months. The sturdy little boat, feeling well packed and firm, thudded along; the kind captain smiled when we met at the narrow dining-table in the small saloon, but he thought more than he spoke. The other three passengers — Gyp had hit them off correctly as commercial travellers—bowed to us and passed the salt with alacrity, but found conversation most easy, apparently, when their deck chairs were as far away from ours as the limits of the deck allowed.

The captain told us one day we were passing the coast of Cochin China. Across the smooth green waters — miles of them — was the little Frenchified seaport of Saigon. We cannot have

all the world, but I know several people who wish the Union Jack held sway there. I would willingly have turned our paddle-wheel in that direction—not with any ousting intention, for my thoughts ran very far up country. From Saigon one may best reach the wonderful ruins—oh! but the most wonderful ruins in the world!—of the palace and wat of Angkor. I had read of them in many books: of the marvellous steps and colonnades, terraces and gateways, sculptures and carvings, the work that needed the genius of a Michael Angelo, and must have been one of the greatest artistic efforts the world has ever seen.

This lost people, lost city, lost temple, deserted in the days of magnificence, leaving no word, no explanation, silence and the jungle engulfing it all with slow tragic inevitableness, this dead Angkor appealed to my imagination. Cousin Mary had looked at me as I spoke my thought in Bangkok, and her look said plainly, "My dear, are you really quite sane where wats are concerned?" and Gyp said "Impossible" so decidedly I gave in, and she added, "You will enjoy longing for your Jungle City far more than you would enjoy the bother of getting there." But she is wrong. The bother of getting there is transitory—the joy of the aftermath is undisturbed.

Gyp and I slept on deck. Even the captain's big cabin was close quarters for three of us, and our tressel beds, duly erected every evening, were delightfully open and cool. One of our Travellers slept at the farthest end of the deck—I never made out which of them, for the deck was dark, and when we crept up the companion ladder all was silent; and when we woke for deck-washing, and disappeared from the swashy scene, someone had already vanished beforehand. So Gyp and I felt we were alone in the dark, empty nights with twinkling

stars peeping beneath the overhead awning, and I never enjoyed nights on board so much.

Gyp said she was a night-bird, and more inclined to open up her soul to man or woman after one o'clock a.m. than at any other time; so in the darkness one night her hand reached out to me, and she began—

"You aren't asleep? Well, don't go, for I feel inclined to talk. I have been thinking of Jim. Were you alarmed about us?"

"Not in the very least," I said coolly.

"Oh! you thought there was nothing in it? But there was—at least, there might have been."

"Oh, of course," my voice was slightly mocking to my own ears, "but then I know your sound views—and Jim's too, for the matter of that."

"Do you know that Jim kissed me?"

"I wonder he didn't do it every morning and every evening if you both liked it. Many people kiss their cousins."

"That's different. I should not have told you, only I thought you saw him—up at Ayuthia. And you were so cross——"

"Imagination, you see. But I thought you always had the courage of your opinions."

"Yes. But it is of the essence of some things not to be shouted on the house-tops, or they lose their savour. And I do think, Helen, that when I talk openly to you in the deep darkness of the night, you might drop your conventional tone and your affected scorn, and be frank and real."

"Well," I said, "I will try. Now why did you want to flirt with Jim?"

"Because you and Mother thought he would not like me. Mother let that out with her warnings. Then I really liked him, and was quite flattered to see I could make him like me. He was much more worth studying than the nice boy Perry; he

would have been too easy, I understood him too quickly. Smiley was that kind too. I don't think I shall flirt with them any more. I am too old now."

"As you wish me to be frank and real with you in this deep dark night, I feel impelled to say I think you reveal yourself as a supreme egoist, and very sure of yourself!"

"Of course I am an egoist. One must take an interest in oneself, and I find myself very interesting. I believe everyone does, only they try to pretend they don't. And as to being sure, no, I am not, not always; I wasn't with Jim, and I quite understand the conditions were in my favour. A quite stupid woman could have a very free hand in Bangkok, there is such a deplorable lack of competition."

"There are too few," I said sagely; "the men get accustomed to their own society. They get women-shy."

"Oh, do you think so?—but then I was there in the house. And anyway, Helen, that is not the case; everyone accepted your invitation always."

"Jim's. And it was not an atmosphere of 'Walk into my parlour.'"

"Oh, I know you are dignified! Well, I have tried that position too, but one needs all experiences. How can you tell what you like until you have tested everything? Mother's good book says that: 'Sample all things, and hold fast to what is good.' And that you must judge for yourself. I am not going to let my godfathers and godmothers decide what is world, flesh, or devil for me!" Gyp turned her pillow and thumped it.

"Don't get energetic—remember there *is* a commercial traveller the other end of this small dark deck. I fear there is no one for you to investigate at present."

"I don't want anyone. At present I am not centrifugal, but what does one call it? drawing in instead of pouring out. Someone lectured on world forces at school, but I have forgotten most of it. That is why I talk to you—to enable me to see clearly what I do mean. And you are not so easily shocked as some people. But you *did* mind about Jim. Why did you?"

"I want Jim to marry someone he will love, and be happy ever after. I don't want him to fritter away his heart, or to get disgusted with women in general. One does not want endless 'experiences' after thirty; one wants the real thing. I call you an egoist, not because you find yourself interesting, but because you do not look at the other person's standpoint; that is not in your horizon."

"I must think that over," said Gyp. "But as for the 'real thing,' you may want that before thirty. Before it comes one just tries one's wings; afterwards it is a lovely long strong flight up to the sun! Glorious! I wonder if Mother ever felt what I feel I could feel! Oh, it's awful to grow old, and not to care, to care *fear*fully about things. And to die! when you can't be sure of gaining or losing. Did you think I was in a funk over the cholera?" she asked suddenly. "I was *not*—exactly. But it was taking chances, and I never care to take chances unless I know I want something sufficiently to make it worth while. And—and I think I was afraid about Jim! I suddenly felt I wanted to be out of it all, away, going to Japan. Someone had to make a move, so I made it. I was not in a funk, but Jim thinks I was. Well, I can't help it—I am going to sleep now. Good-night."

And she was soon as soundly off as a dear innocent babe, while I watched the stars slowly cease peeping

beneath the swinging awning, and the dark blue began to lighten into palest grey and green; then I too slept, and dreamt I was scolding the butler for filling Jim's filter with klong water. "My so velly solly," smiled the butler.

. . . . . .

Weugh! but it was the full force of the monsoon that caught us up our last night on the *Loo Sok*, and blew us along into Hong-Kong. No sleeping on deck that night; we all shared the cabin. Cousin Mary lay pale and with tightened lips, and the swinging lamp showed me her small brandy flask closely pressed with both hands against her breast.

"You are all ready to do the Christian martyr," chaffed Gyp, who was only kept awake by being rolled and tumbled in her narrow berth. "Let your locks flow around you, Mummie, and you are a perfect picture."

Cousin Mary suppressed a smile. She is a very poor sailor, and looked so white I felt glad the brandy bottle was handy.

Then I too lay with tightly closed eyes; things swung so, and our steamer trunks were taking rapid excursions across the floor, and being jerked back with terrific bumps, and the sturdy *Loo Sok* was creaking and groaning, and there were bangs and clatters everywhere; but we felt a quiet confidence, because she and her fair-haired captain so thoroughly knew their business. They were calmly going on their way, roar the monsoon never so wildly.

So we lay still with closed, but conscious, eyes, until the fair haven of Hong-Kong received us out of the storm.

CHAPTER VIII

TOKIMOTO

WHAT a change it was from the small rice-boat, with its narrow limits and the surrounding waste of waters, to the big Europeanised hotel and the fascinating brightness of Hong-Kong! We revelled in everything: in our big rooms, good breakfasts, quick-running rickshaws, and the view from that wonderful Peak-land, where the happiness of the world seems spread out at one's feet, so blue, so bright, so glad are the little islands in that wonderful bay, which lay smiling in bluest sunshine.

Alas that the limitations of time should have to enter into our calculation, and that inevitable necessity should drive one on from so much beauty! The "farewell" follows fast on the heels of the "welcome" in this world of time and tide, and the first concern we had in Hong-Kong was to find means for leaving it.

This was no easy matter, for many travellers blocked every line, and our departure from Bangkok had been too sudden for us to arrange for berths on steamers ahead. We were driven, therefore, to the sad choice between a fortnight's delay in China, whilst the cherry blossom fell in Japan, or the outside course to Kobe and no sailing up the Inland seas.

We decided for the quickly departing Japanese *Maru*, and sighed for the unattainable.

But we had just time to take the night boat up the Pearl River to Canton, and pass the day there; and that taste of China has bound both Gyp and me

FUJI-SAN

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in a vow to return, with plenty of time and money —Gyp visited Jade Street, and it is expensive! Cousin Mary, however, refuses to accompany us. There is something rather terrific in the swarm of yellow faces one encounters in the weird but absolutely fascinating rabbit warren of streets that form the city of Canton.

Five days from Hong-Kong had brought us to Kobe, and considering the grey and troubled sea, and mist-like rain enveloping us, we ceased our intense regret over the omission of the Inland seas. It is possible to roll there and to see nothing! So we began to look forward, and watched the indistinct grey coast-line growing nearer and nearer, saying almost with awe, "That is Japan!"

"Where is Fuji?" asked Gyp.

"Look at the map," I answered sternly.

"Well, I always have imagined Japan as a sweet little place of flowers and fans, and dear little geishas running round with their toes turned in, and Fuji's cone-like crown dominating everything. Now haven't you, Mummie? And here is Helen trying to be so superior, just as if maps gave one any impressions!"

Cousin Mary told me I allowed Gyp to cheek me, but I did not "allow" anything. I was learning my lesson, and the doctrine of non-resistance had begun to appeal to me very strongly. It is so baffling to the other side.

Cousin Mary had quite recovered, and was as brisk and young and cheerful as ever. The enervating climate of Singapore and Siam had faded into the background, and I believed that even wats would have appealed to her, certainly the temples of Japan did so.

When our *Maru* had given her last thud, she was quickly boarded by dapper little men in square-cut black coats with big white hieroglyphics all over

them, and the usual scrimmage with luggage and passengers and farewells took place.

"Do go on ahead, Helen," said Cousin Mary, "and take us rooms at the Oriental. I am sure we ought to have wired. Gyp and I will follow with the luggage."

So I hurried off, and up some quite ordinary stone steps, and landed in Japan.

. . . . . .

The first impression I received was of the feet of the jinriksha man, who rushed to me at my signal.[1] It was raining hard, so he shut me up in his hooded chair and drew waterproof curtains all round me, and with difficulty I reserved just a little passage for air, and all the view I could get was one of his bare brown legs pattering on in front. They were solid, serviceable legs with a straw sandal strapped on each foot, and I fell to meditating on what a good finish the natural foot is to the natural leg, and wondering why we wore pointed shoes. My man was further clothed in rather short and tight-fitting blue hose, and his square-cut blue jacket reminded me of the gardeners in *Alice's Wonderland*. A big sign in white adorned the middle of his back, and a good bold device served as border. He wore a big mushroom hat, raised inside on a tight-fitting frame; this crowned his rather squat but very sturdy figure.

I caught passing glimpses of other feet too as we jogged along—some, bare and brown, splashed unconcernedly through the mud; others wore a white linen boot, called tabi, with a division for the big toe and a strap which holds on the sandal or clog. High clogs, low clogs, straw sandals, no sandals, they seemed numerous for such a day

[1] The Japanese claim the invention of the "man-power-chair," but the East generally has shortened the word to "rickshaw."

of rain as we were enjoying, and I grew interested in my point of view.

Having secured rooms, from the hotel window I continued to watch the procession of little feet and their owners. Everyone appeared to be dressed in grey, everyone but the babies; and these, either bound on their mother's back or toddling by her side, were patches of many bright colours. Magenta, the crudest magenta, is mixed with a strong flannel petticoat red, and with green, blue, and yellow; all colours go to the making of a smart Japanese baby's costume. It is all so crude and clashing, strapped on the small grey mother's back, that the effect becomes pleasing.

Men and women wore sober-coloured kimonos of some good strong material or of silk, with an overcoat like a shorter kimono. The Japanese coolie has ingeniously devised a rain-coat of straw, and he looks like a miniature rick in motion, thatched from the shoulders; and those too poor to have a rain-coat fasten a square of yellow oil-paper over their backs, and look happy.

Strong and sturdy looked some of the men, long and slim others, raised some 3 to 4 inches out of the mud and above their usual height of 5 foot 6 to 5 foot nothing, and all carrying—ah! this was the delightful, the real touch—big yellow oil-paper umbrellas! with beautiful big dashes of black paint, fine big sprawls, the name and address of the owner. And underneath this original shelter looked up and round the most contented, smiling, serene set of faces that ever a wet sky poured down on.

I thought of London, and its mud and rain and leaden skies, of the wet umbrellas and the harassed, unhappy, strained expressions that look out from under the dripping points. The mud was here, and the skies as grey and pouring as any we ever see, but, Heaven help us! how differently we take it!

Yes, that was my first, my ineffaceable impression: those shapely, sensible feet, and those tranquil, benign faces smiling under dripping yellow umbrellas.

. . . . . .

We stood in the hotel doorway next morning and looked out on the rain-washed world, down the street with little brown houses broken by an occasional building of more importance and decidedly European character.

"It is spoiling the cherry blossoms. Oh dear! Oh dear!" sighed Cousin Mary.

"This is Kobe, and Kobe, being a port, is, of course, not so truly Japan as it might be."

I spoke the excuse we were all making mentally for not being more impressed.

"Well, what is our next place?" said Gyp. "Let us get on there."

"We cannot until to-morrow—no rooms in the hotel."

"Where?"

"My dear child, Kyoto, of course." And I added, "Gyp, you *must* read a little Murray, now that you are really here."

"Why? You and Mother can give me a digest. There is nothing like teaching for impressing things on your own mind. I hate guide-books—Mother seems to love them—and I can make a little go a long way. Just keep me posted, and no one need worry."

Standing in the hall, we became ready victims for the attention of various little men and women who, with smiling bows and most insidiously gentle voices, urged our visiting their "Stores"—Mr. Alexander B. Binks would have chuckled over that word. It was no use explaining that we were not staying in Kobe, "You please come—you not buying—you looking," and as we were all presented with many cards, and many bows, we too began to bow and smile and look gracious, so infectious was

their politeness. Gyp was making friends with a peculiarly insinuating young man in dark grey silk kimono and with a neat little dark moustache.

"You really have a manufactory of this china, what do you call it? Satsuma." He had some little specimen in the hotel. "But it is lovely; of course I will come. And you have other curios? All right, then, this afternoon."

A low bow, just making a right angle, and a soft "You please come," and to me, "You please come," and to Cousin Mary, "You please come."

"Isn't he a dear?" said Gyp.

"Now, I must go and see about a guide. I suppose they will tell us in the office. We ought to decide about that," Cousin Mary remarked casually, thinking of a guide as she might a rickshaw man. We knew nothing then.

The little manager bowed low and said—

"No more guides, everyone engaged, 'ery sorry," with a cheerful smile.

"Oh, but we must have a guide," exclaimed Cousin Mary, rather dismayed. "I was told we certainly could not get on without one. Can't you really find one?"

Again the pleasant smile, and the bright dark eyes at a slightly oblique angle gazed out with absolutely no expression. "'Ery sorry, no more guides, many peoples travelling—last guide he engaged to gentleman only just now."

If a Japanese has to say something disagreeable to you he will say it pleasantly, and he will smile, not unsympathetically, but because it is the correct expression for any face. Our quick frowns, impatient movements, hasty and exaggerated words, are to him bad form, showing a want of self-control; and for the thousands of years the Japanese have been evolving, self-control has been one of the main features of their development — not the

enigmatic indifference of the Chinese, but a polite, tight-handed self-control. So he smiles calmly at your distress—or his own.

"Helen, what shall we do?"

I was studying the lists of authorised guides hanging up in the hall.

"Aren't they nice-sounding names? Takiyomo, Nashigoto, Okusama, Ito, Tokimoto, Hama——"

Cousin Mary cut me short.

"But if we can't get any of those nice names! I wonder if there are any unauthorised guides, and if they would be safe? After all, Helen, a guide is very important. It would have been wiser to secure one before——"

"I should think it would!" broke in Gyp. "Why, we can none of us speak the language, and I suppose they don't *all* speak as well as these hotel people."

We seemed to be at a standstill: pouring rain, and no guide to be had. Murray, though excellent, cannot supply every need; we felt we wanted a little individual attention.

Suddenly someone was bowing before us; it was the other little man from behind the office counter. He was also dressed in the regulation dark grey silk dressing-gown, as Gyp would call it, with black satin band and white linen boots.

"Ladies wanting guide? One guide he just come in—can recommend."

"Let us have him!"

"Let us see him!"

"I will speak to him," was Cousin Mary's dignified conclusion to our chorus.

He was rather short, at least standing by Gyp I thought so; afterwards he said he was tall for a Japanese. He had a long, thin face,—we soon grew to know it as a very decided type,—a thoughtful, studious-looking face, with dark eyes, more levelly placed than some, but with the same enigmatical look.

"You are a guide?" began Cousin Mary.

He smiled and bowed.

"You three ladies? All one party? No more?"

"No, we three."

"You going Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Tokyo, Myanoshita——"

"Oh, we shall see!" gasped Cousin Mary. "I should have to talk that over with you and a——"

"You staying one month, six weeks—two months—longer?"

"I—I don't know quite, it depends. Can you come for a week, or two or three days, just to see if—if—you like us?"

Cousin Mary explained afterwards she wished to be polite, only he had frightened her with his rapid list.

"You only wanting guide for two, sree days? So, no sank you. Good-bye."

He bowed again quite politely, and turned to go.

Gyp almost sprang on top of him as she intercepted his retreat.

"Oh, stop! please wait. Oh, Mother, how can you let him go? Mr. Guide, of course we want you. Do tell me your name?"

He drew out a pocket-book from his broad band, and presented a card with a low bow.

"Nashiyama Tokimoto," read Gyp slowly (the vowels are sounded as in Italian). "Is it necessary to say it all?"

"Too long? can say half. Sat my name, sat my faser's name, young lady saying Tokimoto."

"Tokimoto, like that? Well, we really do want you. We are going to all the places you mentioned, and a great many more; and we are going to be here quite two months, or more; and we are all very nice, really! my cousin loves Japan already, and I want to do a lot of shopping, so I wish you would be kind enough to order us three nice comfortable water-tight rickshaws, with three good strong

coolies, and then take us to this place. I promised I would go there."

Nashiyama Tokimoto's face was imperturbable. He looked up at the big girl with her round, eager face and impetuous ways, then he looked at me, and then turned to Cousin Mary, on whose face astonishment was quite plainly betrayed.

"So,"—he had adopted the questioning "So" instead of the Japanese equivalent "Sodesuka," pronounced "Sodeska," without which no Japanese conversation can be carried on for two seconds. It stands for "Is that so?" and "So that is," "Indeed!" "Quite so," "Really." Now it meant all these things, and a great many more.

"Madame not wanting guide? Many peoples here—'ery few guides. Two three days no good."

"It's all right, it's all right, I tell you!" broke in Gyp. "Oh, Mother dear, do be quick and say yes, and let us go out. We are wasting such a lot of time."

Cousin Mary was cool again.

"Yes, I *do* want you; and I understand, of course, you wish to make your plans definitely. Shall we say for a month, and probably longer? I will tell you in time. We are going to Kyoto to-morrow. I have telephoned for rooms. And now, what are your terms?"

They are mentioned in Murray, and he told us so. For the sum of three yen, or six shillings a day, nothing found, he was ready to be our guide, philosopher, and friend. And this he proved himself during two and a half months—for we never dreamt of parting till the last moment—meting out to each of us what we most needed: guiding Gyp's heedless steps, collecting her bag, umbrella, gloves, and handkerchief, paying her bills, and bringing up the rear with her parcels. For me he provided temples, and explained the mysteries of Shintōism, the many "Buddhas" of Japan, and the effect the

Revolution had on both. He talked religion and politics and history, ancient and the brief spell of modern, and he grew as interested in my struggle with my camera as I was. "*Not* forgetting shutter," was his usual reminder.

To Cousin Mary he was indeed a friend. He kept her accounts, he paid our way, rickshaw-men, hotels, tea-places, railways; he arranged everything, labelled our boxes, fastened the hold-all; he relieved her mind of all anxiety about Gyp, and saw she put her keys in her bag and not on the mantelshelf.

"You owe him to me!" said Gyp, as we prepared for the rain and our ride to the shop of her young friend of the morning. "You would have let him escape, both of you! And he is going to be the comfort of our lives—mine, anyway. Now let us come and enjoy Japan."

. . . . . .

A shop was certainly the first thing we visited in Japan. I should feel a little ashamed to acknowledge it, had not the day been so impossible, neither does Kobe offer any other very great attraction.

Cherry blossoms we should find in greater abundance at Kyoto, and best of all at Tokyo, for there is one superlatively best place for seeing all the various flowers, as each in its turn and season holds the popular affection of this artistically flower-loving people. So Tokimoto would not promise us more than "many cherry tree everywhere, much more better Kyoto than Kobe, to-day 'ery much rain, more better go shopping."

Spring, though tardy here as at home, was in the air; it blew fresh and invigorating, full of youth, so it seemed, and making all things new. Spring hung in vivid green tassels from the quaint stumpy willow trees that bordered many of the streets, and an occasional clump of showy white, or a chance pale pink cloud of blossoms, spoke

of what the cherry avenues could be. In the little low brown shops and houses, whose whole front lay open to the road, a big jar with a branch of cherry tree was quite a frequent and inspiring vision.

Our way lay a little outside Kobe, and the procession of rickshaws drew up suddenly in front of a garden gate, and we all stepped out on to a tiny path of flat-laid stones, which circled round, and by means of other stones, over a tiny babbling brook. This came, after ten feet of meanderings, from a miniature fall down a miniature mountain, whose steep sides of some twenty feet were covered with miniature trees, dwarf azalea, not yet out, and a bunch of fine polyanthus to give a touch of colour. By the brook side stood a stately crane in green bronze, and a stone lantern, of the quaint shape we soon learned to associate with temples, was placed at a bend. The whole wonderfully suggestive little landscape was contained in some twenty by thirty feet of ground.

The house, or shop, stood at the end of the garden, and looked like a wooden platform with a top storey of open balcony. The framework was lightly blown together in wood, and partly protected from the outer world by sliding screens of frailest nature, the lattice-work of wood being filled in with white paper. Glass is very rarely used, never in purely Japanese houses. The paper screen is placed some four or five feet back from the edge of the balcony, and when shut up for the night or the cold, the house has further wooden shutters on both floors, which box it all in snugly. By day these shutters slide, with marvellous groanings, as I learnt to know, into a box at the corner of the balconies.

We ascended three steps on to the ground floor, and there Yashimuro San (San answers to Mr., Mrs., or Miss, and is also respectfully applied to

honoured mountains such as Fuji) received us with a bow almost to the ground, and his hands slid down towards his knees, with a gentle little indrawn hiss. He was much more Japanese in his own house than in the hotel.

"You please come in."

He stood in his grey silk kimono, wearing only his white linen tabi—his sandals and many other pairs lay at the foot of the steps. Tokimoto shed his, and we looked down at our laced and buttoned shoes, and then at the spotless matting on the raised floor.

Our polite host saw our unaccustomed glance, and urged us to come in.

"You never mind, it no matter."

But my shoes were off in a second.

"Don't, Helen, don't," whispered Gyp, in agitation. "Let us stick to our shoes, for goodness' sake!"

"But why, Gyp? This matting is so beautifully clean, we can't soil it. You know they never do in Japan!"

"Oh, hang Japan! I am English. I *can't* take off my shoes."

"But why not?" I was bewildered by her unnecessary energy; then it dawned on me. "Oh! is it bad? Where is it?"

"The toe, of course, so I really can't. Oh! there is Mother letting that man take off her boots. It is really too bad, too horribly thoughtless. Well, I don't care. I shan't!" and wiping them as well as she could, she sprang on to the matting. Tokimoto looked at her anxiously, and alas for it! there was a decided footprint on the spotless floor.

Gyp advanced fearlessly into the next room, divided only by screens of substantial cardboard covered with gold-flecked paper. Here were suits of armour, a big statue of a war deity, smaller images of Buddhas, hanging bells, bronze articles,

and a collection of the small parts of the beautiful swords worn by the warrior class.

It is not so very long ago—not yet forty years, which is not much in the life of a nation—that this armour and these swords were in active service.

When the present Emperor assumed the kingly power—or rather, when his party invested him with it—so long withheld from the Mikados by the Shoguns, or Regents, he began a work of reform, and one of his first edicts, at the conclusion of the Civil War, was that all the Samurai and Ronins —the two degrees of the warrior class—should lay down their swords. When one considers that "a girded sword is the living soul of a Samurai," and had been by his side and the love of it in his heart since the beginning of all things, that his hand had disdained any other implement, one can appreciate the extraordinary power of the obedience and veneration in which the Emperor's will was held, that all these beautiful swords were promptly laid down at the "Son of Heaven's" word.

The new Army and Navy could not absorb all the noble fighting class, and many turned to the police force for occupation, others to trade, that lowest of all depths in the eyes of Old Japan; and there are some very noble crests to be found on kimonos whose wearers bow to you with exquisite politeness behind their shop counters.

For my own part, I cannot understand their submission, and had there been a Cave of Adullam in the Hacone Mountains, I should have sought it. The swords are often so beautifully wrought, so wonderfully inlaid with Damascene work, and their hands must have felt so cold and empty without these trusted friends by their side.

The sword-maker's art was the only trade venerated in Old Japan, and that was held in highest esteem, for was it not handmaiden to the noblest of all professions?

Big cloisonné jars were attracting Gyp's attention, and Tokimoto was anxiously watching her and taking the vases carefully from her seemingly reckless hands. He quickly grasped the situation, and always followed her round like a cat when she began investigating a curio shop.

Cousin Mary was in the next division, and I heard Yashimuro's soft voice explaining the treasures of Satsuma.

"Oh, it is old, but sat is sure. Not making now sis kind. 'Ery rare. You please buy sis."

I stayed with the swords, or rather the various pieces that made up the whole sword, and went back to Old Japan, to the times of the magnificent daring Samurai, ready to fight for his Daimio, or prince, who again was at the beck and call of the Shogun then in power, or the man who had risen up and wished to oust the Shogun and reign in his stead. The Mikado was but a nominal head, with power to exalt notable warriors to minor deityhood after their deaths; but the strain and stress of the warlike life were not for him, he was safely kept in his palace at Kyoto, and the Shogun reigned at Yedo, the present Tokyo.

Under the Samurai were the Ronins of many famous tales and adventures, faithful till death, and beyond it too; for to follow their lord to the great Beyond by the gruesome self-inflicted death of "hara-kiri" was no uncommon thing.

I had been reading *Mitford's Tales*, and "Old Japan" was beginning to live for me: these swords were an inspiration.

The two little daggers placed in the sword handle, passing through the same holder, were most attractive, with delicate inlayings of brass or gold and silver; the one like a sharp knife gave the *coup de grâce* to the dying foe, and the other, like a slim pointed paper-cutter, was left in the body, as a card might be, to show who had been there.

Grand, free, fierce old times! And out of all that battle and bloodshed has come forth this polite, obedient, self-controlled, and self-sacrificing little people, gentle and low of voice, but as hardy, as loyal, as devoted as ever; eager, only too eager, to lay down their lives for their Emperor and their country. But I need not mention country; the Emperor, the descendant of the gods, he embodies for them their country, and often their religion; his will is to be done, and they are proud to die in the doing of it.

Gyp brought me back to the land and time of peace.

"Helen! come and look at this darling little Buddha in his neat little lacquer case! I am sure he will help me in the Way. Isn't he sweet, sitting on his lotus, folding those beautifully carved hands, and looking as contented as a cow? I wonder how much he costs? Where is that little man? Of course Mother has bagged him! Do you know if one should bargain here? Shall I ask Toki—what's his name?"

"Gyp, they are so polite here, get the name right, and don't call them little!"

"Why not? They are. I don't mind being called tall. And Toki is my sworn friend; he sticks to me like a leech. Let us get my other friend Yashi—and make him show us the manufactory. He said he had one here. Come and worry them out!"

Yashimuro was most willing.

"Yes, you come to my manufactory, he just here."

He drew aside a partition, and there in a small matted room, with all the paper window screens open for the light, sat three men and a boy. A narrow long table raised some eighteen inches from the ground was covered with painting materials and little cups, vases, bowls, etc., of the fine cream-coloured Satsuma pottery which these squatting

artists were covering with figures, flowers, birds, and butterflies, every species of ornamentation.

"You see! sey painting Satsuma—he 'ery good artist."

It was rather an ideal "manufactory," without noise or smell, and the grave grey-gowned figures handled the pottery with loving care as they added one fine touch on another; but as Gyp said, she had wished to see the "making" from the beginning, and here we certainly had only the finishing touches.

"I showing you some much more old Satsuma—sis modern," said Yashimuro; and we followed him into another division prepared for the European victim, for there stood a real table, and chairs were hastily placed, and, seated in state, we felt that now business was beginning.

From carefully packed little wooden boxes Yashimuro drew forth most dainty specimens of Satsuma, cloisonné and ivories, and other china treasures, and we began our initiation.

We were ignorant, we are still, and the longer we stayed in Japan the more ignorant we felt sure we were; at this time our ignorance was such that we did not appreciate it.

Confucius said, "Shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it—this is knowledge."

Therefore we know a little more than we did.

The understanding of real old Satsuma is a thing to be acquired with patient study by most people, though some are to the manner born, with a touch for wares of all kinds, an eye for glaze and colour, and a general instinct for what is old. They know quicker. But for our comfort be it said, modern Satsuma is wondrously beautiful and a work of minutest care and love. One little bowl will hold in its hollow a miracle of myriad inter-

laced butterflies' wings, or every chrysanthemum flower that could be plucked and held close together. The first Satsuma pottery had none of these wonders, it is as rare as "Old Chelsea," and its shape and glaze, fineness of crackle, and creaminess of colour, are its only beauties. The next stage was partly decorated, and this is the kind that entirely took my fancy.

As we admired any particular thing I noticed Yashimuro put it on one side, until three little piles grew and grew, and Gyp's became a perfect mound.

Cousin Mary looked uncomfortable, and began to say in French, "He wants us to take all these things, what shall we do?" but stopped short, for why should not Yashimuro talk French and German, and all the known languages? I think, however, here, as elsewhere in the East, English is the one meeting ground.

Another little Jap, a brother—for they were as like as two peas—came sliding in, bowing low, but holding steadily a small tray on which were four little dainty cups, full of a pale green beverage, and a plate of what looked like white china cherry blossoms.

"You please take some tea. Oh yes! you please drink Japanese tea. You liking. Oh yes, it 'ery good."

It was not our usual idea of tea, and it was taken neat; the white cherry blossoms proved to be a sugary confection meant to be nibbled as one drank, and gave a suggestion of sweetness. The tea is fragrant, and after a little practice—and we had plenty—we grew to like it. Gyp became very popular, she always asked for more; then the little men, or funny bundle of kimonos—if it chanced to be a maid—would smile and bow and gently hiss, and fill up the tiny cup, saying, "You liking our Japanese tea—'ery good he is!"

I noticed also that we were evidently living up to Tokimoto's hopes; we were going to appreciate Japan. But after all these smiles and bows and tea and general friendliness, it became quite apparent that we must do our share, we must buy something; though I am sure the politeness would not have diminished one jot had we failed to do so.

Cousin Mary glanced at the piles and then said—

"Your things are very lovely, but please do not show us any more to-day. Helen, which of these treasures have you set your heart on?"

Yashimuro San of the bead-like eyes saved me the trouble of answering; he gently pushed one pile towards Cousin Mary—

"You please buy sese." Another to me, "You please buy sese." And the big mound of Gyp's admiration—we had become more cautious in our speech—was indicated to her, "And you please buy sese."

"I should love to," said Gyp, rising with grand rustle of skirt, "I want every one of them, and a great deal more. You just ask my Mamma-San if she will pay for them. I can't—I wish I could. Now, Mummie, what are you going to take? Have that bowl and that vase, and buy me this teapot. And Helen—oh, of course, Helen is going to buy up the armoury."

The little man turned on me.

"You taking sis pot, he 'ery beautiful."

He was, big and beautiful; I mentioned his bigness as rather against him for a travelling companion.

"You not carrying. I sending to England—packing—going quite good."

"But I fear he is too expensive. I would like a little bit of Satsuma, and a little dagger——"

"You please buy sis—he 'ery beautiful."

Gyp gave a quiet chuckle and joined the enemy.

"Why, Helen, of course he is a beauty; do take him. Just think how well he would look at home with tall flowers in him."

A big jar with colour splashed on it, as though a stream of mauves and reds, blues and roses, had overflowed from its mouth. I had admired it as I entered the room. "You needn't carry it round," went on Gyp, "you can send it by sea."

"It is too dear—forty yen! Of course I can't. Gyp, don't talk nonsense."

"You please make an offer," said the little man, and I felt like a fly well in the parlour.

"I really can't. I should offer too little."

"You please *make* an offer."

Gyp laughed. "Go ahead; you have no sport in you. Make an offer; that won't kill you!"

"Oh, buy something yourself, Gyp."

"I mean to. I want to see you settled first."

"You please make an offer," and the little dark head was bowing in front of me over the pot.

"Very well, but you won't like it. I don't know the value a bit, but—I cannot give more than twenty yen."

The little man for one moment let a shade of disappointment pass over his face, then he bowed very low.

"I sank you for se offer, but I cannot do—I sank you."

I was very relieved. I did not want to give even two pounds. Then I bought a small dagger and a Satsuma bowl, and was delighted to see Gyp pursued round with a big china elephant with many trappings and ornaments, and a large Chinese junk covered with flowers. She led the way back to her Buddhas, and decided on two, a big and a little one—calm, quaint figures in black lacquer cases; and Cousin Mary, with two vases and an incense pot, rose up to go.

But even then the affair was not quite concluded. We had not been travelling in the East for nothing, and neither had the dear little Jap been keeping a "Store" for many years at a port without learning some of the business ways of this wicked world, both East and West. To pay the price asked would have seemed foolish to both sides. We took our smiling friend's advice and "made an offer," not generally as low as my first unwilling bid for the beautiful jar I admired at a distance, but somewhere between half and two-thirds of the price mentioned. It was all done amiably.

"Oh, you *can* let me have this for four yen!"

"Truly sat too little—you saying five yen. Can do for five yen."

"That seems a good deal. Look here, we will put these two things together, and say ten yen for both?" Gyp's tone was so encouraging that Yashimuro had to think it an excellent plan, and eventually we all got through our fencing with smiles and bows on both sides.

Gyp, however, did not like her Mother to bargain, and was always inclined to join the enemy. This was disconcerting to Cousin Mary, and I, of course, had to go to the rescue.

"Why do you do it?" I asked Gyp afterwards.

"I don't know, except that it seems to me fair. He probably wants the money more than Mother does."

"But, Gyp, you bargain yourself!"

"Yes, oh yes, of course I do, and you may too; but someone must pay for all the politeness and tea, and leave the little man happy, and of course that someone must be Mother. I believe I have a very keen sense of justice. I think that sort of thing develops as the world goes on. I often notice you and Mother are deficient in it—not you so much, perhaps."

"How hopeful you make me, Gyp. The mere

rolling on of the world develops all the virtues. You sit still, and are rolled!"

"No, it is more like a ladder, and I get on one rung higher because I naturally start higher——"

"It is kind of you to try and hoist your poor old Mother and antiquated friends up with you," I said, but Gyp swept the subject aside for matters more important.

We got into our shoes and rickshaws with many smiles and bows, and "You please come again, and you please buy se elephant, and you se pot," were the last words.

Afterwards Tokimoto expressed his feelings.

"You say you going that shop—you say Miss Gyp he promised" (we soon perceived that Tokimoto's use of pronouns was limited. They don't trouble with them much in Japanese. English as they speak her sounds very attractive, and though they can quite well master the "th," the line of least resistance is more frequently chosen, and the little soft s's slide out very smoothly), "but I not taking you. He talking too much, he making buy, he not one-price shop. My taking you plenty more shops in Kyoto, much more better curios, you buying Kyoto, not Kobe."

"Why did you not tell us sooner?" asked Gyp, a trifle sternly.

"You saying 'I going sere,' so you going. Oser time my telling you. Can go plenty shops not making buy, and one-price shop much more better."

I think that is the only point on which I disagreed with Tokimoto. I never found the one-price shop.

A Torii, Temple Gateway.

A Temple at Kyoto.

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CHAPTER IX

THE SUN-GODDESS AND THE CHERRY-BLOSSOM DANCE

We were seated on the grey stone steps that lead up to the temple of Kiyomizu; stately fir trees and branching spring greenery formed a background, and before us lay, smiling in the freshest of springtimes, the fascinating town of Kyoto. The Kiyomizu temple clings to one of the hillsides rising round the town, and is built on and supported by a regular scaffolding of poles. Once there, once above the straight and steep way of steps, to which no doubt some "merit" is attached, you have at any rate a present reward. Before you lie the quaint low brown houses of the irregular streets; the fine slope of the temple roofs, and their open gateways (torii) in red or black; a glimpse of winding river, and the bright verdure of the surrounding country and hillside, with here and there an occasional dash of white blossom, like forgotten snow; the late double cherry tree, giving its pure note of colour, when the full harmony of the pink shower is at an end. The air was full of life, carrying a reminiscence of Florence in her spring moments, but with the charm of the half-tones, the suggestive mystery of not quite clear vision, that belongs to the brightest days of another far-away island home.

Oh, the temples of Japan! How can so poor an implement as a modern pen, and so thin a substance as ink, convey to anyone's mind the gorgeous colouring, the richness of carving, the weirdness,

fancifulness, and solidity that go to the making of a Buddhist temple in Japan? Even Lafcadio Hearn's magic pen cannot entirely re-create the wondrous effect, and there is no picture in Mortimer Mempes' vivid sketches which touches the reality.

I had loved the Bangkok wats; their iridescent tinsel, china, glass, and whitewash still glittered pleasingly in my memory's eyes in that baking sunshine; but here, from the quaint gateway with its upward-curved lintel — upward-curved for a Buddhist temple, and squarely straight for one of Shintō denomination — to the innermost recess which holds the big Buddha statue, it is all perfect: colouring, carving, work, and design. The spotless cleanliness, the reverence, the solemnity, convey a feeling of sanctity that can hardly be called forth by the yellow-robed priests who serve Buddha in other lands. Here the priests wear robes of various colours according to the monastery or sect to which they belong, and while performing the service they don cloaks, or copes, of magnificent brocade, and stoles of the same. Other Buddhist countries may claim greater purity of doctrine, but here only could one feel that it was indeed well to take one's shoes from off one's feet, for it was holy ground.

I do not say that to a Japanese this is the idea with which he requests you to remove the covering of your feet — it is a regular custom on entering all habitations; and though I wish to draw no invidious comparisons, it is a very nice custom. But I have felt a deeper significance in doing this at the head of the steep flight of steps that often leads to a temple; and when, on entering, you kneel with the little squatting congregation on the soft matting, and through the incense-laden air, between big branches of cherry blossom, azalea, iris, whatever the flower of the month may be, look up at the big benign Buddha, lost

in everlasting contemplation, shrouded in "colossal calm," some of that calm, some of that deeper vision may come also to you, if the gates of your mind are not quite closed to the many manifestations the Great Father has given His many children, and you can feel that for this "Light" too you may thank the Giver of all Light.

We had walked with reverent, unshod feet through the glories of carving and lacquer surrounding the calm, half-flower-hidden Buddha, the Lady Kwannon of the thousand comforting arms, to whom this particular temple is dedicated; and now in the sweet sunshine we questioned Tokimoto, who, with anxious, hesitating tongue, tried to elucidate for us the differences between Buddhism and Shintōism, making his own position clear with the remark—

"I Shintō."

"But you may be both, mayn't you?" I suggested.

"Oh no," said the Shintōist in Tokimoto, recalling, doubtless, the grand reform that completed the grand revolution of 1868, when the Mikado, finally head of religious, civil, and military Japan, and the Shogunate a thing of the past, had also purified the State religion, Shintōism, and separated it, as far as possible, from its friendly alliance of one thousand five hundred years with the kindly, adaptive religion of Buddhism. Shintōism, which dates from the beginning of all things in Japan, had likewise shown itself to be of the same friendly liberality, and allowed its many manifestations of deity to be regarded as "attained ones," the Buddhas of the sister faith. Thus had been evolved the "Ryōbu Shintō," the "Combined Way of Heaven," which has dwelt so long in the people's heart that no reformation has been able to divorce it, and they smile in calm faith with their Buddha,

be he represented as Amida, Kwannon, Shaka, or another, and they fight with the readiest sword for their "Son of Heaven," the head of the Shintō faith.

So Tokimoto said "No" first, and then added, meditatively, "Many peoples going both temples, but priests he different now, and no Buddhas in Shintō temples. In Shintō temples all plain, all empty. Wooden table, gohei" (gold and white paper hangings, cut in long fingers, tokens of gifts), "one mirror and god. Sat all. Buddhist," and he waved his hand to the gorgeous temple at our side, "Buddhist having many statues, too many, too many sings. At reformation all Buddha priests, all Buddha statues sent away from Shintō temples, all dividing again like in very beginning." Tokimoto swept the air with energetic hands, and then subsided smiling, and took Gyp's offer of a cigarette.

"Soothe him down," said Gyp. "But I know," she went on, "just how he feels. I have boiled over when I have thought how they destroyed our beautiful windows, and swept out art treasures at the time of our great iniquitous Reformation!"

"But Toki is boiling the other way!" We had abbreviated his name with his smiling consent. "He is the iconoclast! He is delighted at the clean sweep! You don't like Buddhist things, do you, Toki?"

"Oh no—not liking. Much more better having only Shintō."

"Alas, Toki, but you are narrow-minded after all!" sighed Gyp, who, after sharing her cigarette-case with Tokimoto for over a week, had decided he was quite enlightened, forgetting it was the one thing in her five-foot nine inches of unorthodox Western emancipation that did not shock him. Did not all his own quiet little country-women smoke their tiny, dainty enamel pipes on every possible occasion?

"Well, Toki, just expound your own particular faith for my benefit. I understand something of Buddhism, though that is confusing enough here, where there are so many manifestations of Buddhas of both sexes! But before you take us to your own holiest temple, Ise, you must teach me something of the very beginning of it all. It means the 'Way of the Gods,' doesn't it? Well, what was that Way?"

"Sat'ery much talking. Miss Gyp he reading, like Miss Helen reading. Much more better."

"Take care, Toki; perhaps we won't go to your Ise. Perhaps we will 'change-a-mind'!"

This was the one thing that disturbed Tokimoto's serenity. He must have guided women who did nothing else, so great was his horror of any sign of vacillation.

"Oh no, Madame going. Madame and Miss Helen *say* she going, and Miss Gyp liking dance 'ery much. It beauteous."

"I think you ought to read, Gyp," said her mother; and I added, "Do you know you are asking Toki for an epitome of his history from the beginning of all things! That is rather a severe strain on his English. You are very lazy, Gyp."

"No, I am not. But I am too busy with my own impressions to read a guide-book. Besides, we said we would divide the various duties, and I look after the hold-all."

"No, Toki does."

"Under me! But go ahead yourself. History and religion were told off to you; compress the epitome, and then I won't say a word against this long pilgrimage Mother and you and Toki have set your hearts on."

"Not 'ery long," broke in Tokimoto. "We going Nara, next day Yamada. Ise temple at Yamada. Miss Helen telling Miss Gyp about Sun-

Goddess." He smiled encouragingly at me, and Cousin Mary said, "Do, Helen; I have not got it quite clear yet myself." So we all settled ourselves as comfortably as might be on the old grey stone steps, and Gyp blew little curling smoke clouds into the delicious pureness of the spring air. The light seemed to dance over the quaint brown roofs of the nestling city and sparkle on the surrounding greenness, and the conviction came over me that there never had been a fairer country, a purer air, than this of the land of the Rising Sun. Surely the Sun-Goddess, the founder of Japanese history and religion, whose story they asked for, smiled very specially on this favoured land of her own descendants.

"Listen, then," I said. "I will tell it as to children, for otherwise the stupendousness of the task, into which I have myself but peeped, will shut my mouth, even as it appears to have shut Toki's."

"That is his English, or his modesty, or his laziness! Which will you have, Toki?" asked Gyp.

And Tokimoto answered with his enigmatical smile, which always grew wiser the less he understood, and he just said, "Might," which we had learned to know suggested any possibility we liked to infer.

So I began—

"In the beginning of all things there were gods celestial and gods terrestrial — also goddesses. And the Great Father of them all—who corresponds to Odin, Thor, Jove—deputed one Izanagi"—Toki murmured the name after me—"to descend and form out of chaos a new kingdom. Izanagi and his wife, Izanami, performed the task, and behold! the islands of Nippon, the land of the Rising Sun. Then Izanagi and Izanami peopled these islands, and decreed who should govern the sea and the mountains, the wind, fire, herbs, and trees. To three of the most promising of their children were given portions of the new kingdom, and the one

who succeeded best as a ruler appears to have been Amaterasu Omikami, the Sun-Goddess, born from the right eye of Izanagi; her moon-brother being born from his left."

"Of course she did," interpolated Gyp; "women were born to rule. Lay that to heart, Toki."

Toki shook his head, but then nodded "might." He had doubtless remembered the famous Empress Jingo and her palmy days.

"Go on, dear," said Cousin Mary; "and Gyp, don't interrupt."

"There was another brother, violent-tempered Susanoo, born from his father's nose."

"In a sneezing fit?" suggested Gyp.

"History does not mention, but I daresay he was; anyway, he frightened and insulted his brilliant sister one day, and she took refuge in a cave, and remained there; and with her entrance into that cave out went all the light, and the progress of the world was at a standstill. The other gods and goddesses hurried up to see why the sun was off duty. Susanoo explained he had only been explaining to Amaterasu how unjustly his father had treated him, in depriving him of his kingdom, and doubtless he did say hard things, as it was to be given to Amaterasu, the good girl; but she need not have beaten so sudden a retreat! They all surrounded her cave, and entreated and sang and danced, but nothing tempted her out. Then someone had the happy idea of bringing a mirror; and catching occasional glimpses of the petulant goddess, they reflected back on her her own light. This unknown rival so excited her curiosity that she hurried from the cave, and as the world was again illumined, the rejoicings were great; and Amaterasu, having recovered her equanimity, adopted the mirror as her emblem."

"Oh, that is why it always hangs in the Shintō

temples!" observed Cousin Mary. "But, Tokimoto, you told me it meant 'know thyself,' or something like that."

Tokimoto leant forward eagerly.

"Yes, so it meaning. Glass like Sun-Goddess—all clear, all good. My looking in glass and sinking, 'Good inside—not dark.'" He pressed his hand earnestly, not on his heart, which is the Western world's idea of the seat of the affections, but, following biblical lines, below his black satin sash, which, according to Eastern thought, is the centre of our human economy. This of course explains the gruesome but glorified death of hara-kiri. We under the same emotions should stab to the heart.

"And yet, Toki," said Gyp, "you objected to my buying that old metal mirror the other day. You said 'No good.' Why, when it is properly polished up, I shall be able to see if I am good and clean!"

Tokimoto shook his head.

"No nice 'omen buying mirrors, no nice 'omen selling. Mirror, that herself, she looking all her life, like herself, *not* selling. When dying giving to temple."

"But the temples can't want so many!"

"Yes—oh yes. When 'ery many collecting, making all one big new Buddha statue. Much more better sat—not selling, not buying."

"Oh, Toki, you cannot want more Buddhas. You say you don't like him. Now go on, Helen. The 'Way' is long."

"You lead into bypaths—I don't know where I was."

"Susanoo?—what happened to him? I have a fancy for Susanoo."

"So have I; he was the first Japanese poet, and he has left many legends of prowess and daring to the country he failed to rule wisely and well. He was banished to Korea, and set up his kingdom there."

"I suppose that is why Japan has always wanted Korea," commented Cousin Mary.

"Yes," said Toki, and his bright eyes flashed. "Japan always taking care Korea."

"In the usual way, so I have heard," I added. "But even the wisest of us make mistakes, Toki."

"What happened then, Helen?"

"They built a temple to him in his old country, the northern island Izumo. It is the oldest Shintō shrine in Japan. During one month in the year all the gods go there, and they call it 'God is month,' and at the deserted shrines they say 'No god month,' for they are all holding high festival at Izumo."

"We will go there too," said Gyp, with finality.

Both Tokimoto and Cousin Mary shook their heads. Izumo was too far a cry.

"We must try and be content with the Ise temple. It is the chief, if not the oldest; and Amaterasu, when she resigned all earthly interests in favour of her grandson, gave him a precious dragon sword, presented her by the repentant Susanoo, a jewel, and her mirror, saying, 'This mirror is my spirit; regard it as myself,' and the Ise temple was built to guard these treasures. There they are to this day, handed down from Mikado to Mikado. On special occasions he and his ancestors assemble there, and commemorate a thanksgiving service."[1]

"Certainly we will see those treasures. You will like that, Gyp," said Gyp's mother.

"Oh, not seeing mirror! No one never seeing. Always covered. Mikado and chief priest sey seeing covering. We not seeing covering," added the truthful Tokimoto regretfully, for he feared he was imperilling the chance of the pilgrimage, about which he was evidently very keen.

"What shall we see if we go all that way?" demanded Gyp practically.

[1] Such a service was held at the Ise temple after the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese war.

Toki temporised, and I aided and abetted him.

"You seeing dance. He 'ery beauteous."

"Good enough," summed up Gyp. "We going, Toki, for the good of your soul, as well as our own. Finished, Helen? The Sun-Goddess departed, and the grandson brings us to earth."

"Not quite. The grandson's grandson was the Emperor Jimmu, and he began real history—I mean earthly history—some time between 600 and 500 B.C. All the Mikados claim direct descent through him from the radiant Sun-Goddess, and have always been regarded as semi-divine."

"You believe that, Toki?" asked Gyp crudely.

"Oh yes, I believing," nodded Tokimoto gravely.

"Helen, I do not understand about the ancestors; are they part of the 'Combination Way'?" asked Cousin Mary, who in our division of labour had undertaken the geographical department, and worked out routes with Tokimoto.

"I think they must be the 'Way' itself. I picture it as a long path of the Dead, who are so truly the Living—in this country, at least. It begins with the Celestials, the radiant Amaterasu herself. The loyalty to the Divine in her has been transmitted uninterruptedly and undiminished through these two thousand years to all her descendants, 'the Sons of Heaven.' And this loyalty was subdivided and shared by all heads of clans and of families, and when they departed this life, they were still part of the long 'Way' that reached from heaven to earth; they were not forgotten, nor forgetting, no more than the sun forgot to shine and bless. They direct, they inspire, they are the 'great cloud of witnesses.' To disgrace them is the heaviest sin, to join them by a worthy death is glory itself."

"But that is Japanese, my dear Helen, not Shintōism!" exclaimed Cousin Mary, rather resentfully. "The Buddhists here are just as loyal; and

A Shinto Shrine

A Buddha in a Garden

look at their beautiful temples, and the way the people come to them!"

"But they are all Shintōists, because it spells 'loyalty' to them. Aren't they, Toki? Why, it is in their bones, let them call themselves what they will. Work out this loyalty, this reverence, for all the present and past, and you have 'the Way.'"

Gyp broke in with a brief for her Buddha.

"I believe it is Buddha who has made them so gentle and self-controlled. He has taught them *that* Way. He has given them their love of beauty. Why, your old Shintō turns out the works of art from the temples! It is a fighting, swash-buckling, aggressive spirit. It invented that nasty hara-kiri; it——"

"It is the other side of the shield, my child, and I only wonder it is not the one you look at!"

"No, I am going on loving my Buddha; but Toki, I like him best in a peaceful garden. I find too many temples give me indigestion. Miss Helen will have her daily dose!—it was just the same in that grilling Siam,—we really must limit her."

Tokimoto looked very puzzled, but he had caught something about a Buddha in a garden, so he brightened up.

"Oh, we going Kamakura; 'ery big Buddha sitting in 'ery big garden. Miss Gyp liking him."

"Well, Toki, perhaps I may, if he is my special Buddha, my 'Light of Asia.'"

"Kamakura Buddha, he Amida. Japanese peoples 'ery much liking Amida. Buddha he most often Amida. Benten, she lady-Buddha, many 'omen praying her; and Kwannon, she lady too, many arms she having, helping many peoples. 'Ery good Buddha, Kwannon," Tokimoto added meditatively—practical ideas appeal to him. "Then Fudo, he Fire God; Miss Helen she always liking Fire God. I thinking he 'ery ugly." Which was certainly true; but Fudo, who is rightly the

God of Wisdom, is surrounded by a splendid halo of flames, long brass tongues, and reminded me of another favourite deity, Loki.

"One day we going Enoshima, when in Yokohama; then seeing Kamakura Buddha too."

"Enoshima?" asked Gyp. "That another Buddha?"

Toki laughed, and went on laughing until Gyp said, "I seem to have been funny; you two are likewise grinning, but I prefer Toki's simple mirth. What is it all about, eh, Toki? Come to, and go on instructing me."

Toki tried to straighten his countenance.

"Enoshima little island, Miss Gyp got little painting, Fuji-san sere, some sea, and Enoshima, sat Benten's island, Benten going sere when 'ery bad dragon killing peoples, she marrying him, making him good. I not believing all ses stories! I Shintō, no good Buddhist." Thus wound up Tokimoto.

I roused myself.

"I don't think that is quite fair, Toki! The Buddhas are beautiful, and all the teaching is good. It has made the people kind, gentle to each other and to the animals; it teaches them to pray, to believe in a future life——"

"I not believing future life," broke in Toki, "my granmosser he believing" (this with a good deal of thought; his grandmother's opinions evidently had weight), "but I! Oh, I dunno!"

"But, Toki, don't you believe in a future life? I thought you said you were going to heaven!" exclaimed Gyp, with great astonishment.

"Oh yes, I going heaven! Oh yes. But future life? I dunno!"

"Oh, reincarnation!" I exclaimed. "I see."

While Cousin Mary suggested, "You mean you don't think you will come back as a frog or a bear?"

"I dunno," continued the confused Toki. "My

grandmosser he saying, 'Yes, coming,' but he Buddhist."

"Well, go on, tell us the difference. You are going to heaven right enough, Toki; but I suppose there *is* a hell for some other people?"

"Oh yes," laughed Toki; "bad peoples sey going hell. Oh yes!"

"That's nice and comforting! Isn't it, Mummie? I think you incline to Toki's Shintōism. I feel I would not mind taking my turn at being a bird, a beautiful strong eagle. Oh, there's lots to say for that kind of future life! Heaven is vague. But, Toki, why do not you like Buddhism?"

Tokimoto braced himself for his answer.

"Buddhism not good religion. Japan wanting strong men, much doing, much business, armies, navies, not sitting still. Buddha he teaching not caring for anysing, not wanting money, not working, just sitting so." (Toki folded his hands across his knees, palms upwards, like the statues of Amida, and fixed his eyes glassily in front of him. His was not the placid type of face engendered by the contemplative life, but keen and active, his oblong bright eyes always very wide awake.) "No business doing, not caring what he eating, just *sinking*. Sat no good! Much more better not teaching Buddhism."

Cousin Mary suggested Christianity: "Not slothful in business," but "doing what your hand finds to do with all your might."

"Sat like Shintō. I Shintō," said Tokimoto conclusively.

Gyp leant over and whispered—

"Now I won't have Mother begin missionising. I have sometimes feared I detected signs of it with Toki. I think it is such impertinence!"

"But, my dear Gyp!"

"No, listen. We have not made such a brilliant success of our own affairs that we can afford to go

round preaching. And we may as well find out what *they* think. No one could call Toki a heathen, not even a missionary!"

"Toki," I resumed, "there is one Buddha we have not seen yet. That is Jizō, the children's Buddha."

Tokimoto again shook his head.

"Just frightening children, all ses stories! I not telling sem my baby."

"But Jizō," asked Cousin Mary, while Gyp offered Toki a cigarette, "is that any allusion to ——?"

"No, a mere coincidence in the sound." And I told how this special Buddha receives the little ones as they pass over into the shadowland, and if they are crying they go and hide their little heads in his robes, and he comforts them. And if the lord of that country, the stern Emma-O, gives them tasks, such as the piling up of heaps of little stones, the good Jizō comes and helps them. That is why you sometimes see by the green wayside in country roads a little bench with penthouse roof, and tiny stone Buddhas, Jizōs, with piles of little stones between; the mothers have placed them there to remind him to help their little ones. In most temples, in some side corner, will be found a statue of this gentle Jizō, and he will be almost smothered in baby garments, little bibs, or sandals, or tiny coats; the mothers will have brought them to call his attention specially to their baby. But Tokimoto waved aside the pretty notion, for it included the shadowy passage, the tasks, and the grim Emma-O, with attendant Onis.

"Shintō teaching just God. He good, babies good, sey going heaven. Not crying at Shintō funeral. Buddhists sey crying, sey unhappy; Shintō—no!"

"Oh, Toki," exclaimed Gyp, driving home her point with the practical conclusion shown, perhaps,

only by the young, "you would cry if your baby went to heaven!"

"No, I *not* crying. I never crying. Moser might—she 'oman."

"Do you ever kiss your baby?" suddenly asked Gyp.

"Japanese peoples not kissing—not much."

"But do *you* kiss *your* baby?"

"Some babies not liking." Tokimoto had an uncomfortable look which made Gyp press her point.

"But does your baby like it when you kiss her?"

"Sometimes does—might," admitted the truthful Toki at last.

"Ha, ha, Toki! I *know* you love it, though you think it good form to pretend indifference. Now tell me, can fathers kill their children as they used to do?"

"That old-fashioned times. Shogun times."

"And now if a father kill his child, what happens?"

"Hang it," was the prompt answer; and one hopes that justice is less mixed over pronouns than Toki was.

There was one other Buddhist deity to whom Gyp became very attached, and that was the doctor Buddha, Binzuru. He is not seated among the other Buddhas, who assemble in the outer court of a temple, but a little apart, as he has not yet fully "attained." To him is given the special care of human aches and pains, and he kindly allows his own person to be rubbed bright and shiny, if not considerably rubbed away, by the faithful who seek his aid. For a headache you rub his forehead, and for other pains you rub the corresponding parts; he sits and smiles benignly at you, as though saying—

"Mortal mind! that's all it is. Grin, and you won't have to bear it."

Gyp took to consulting him on every possible

occasion, and always borrowed money from anyone who would lend it, to drop into his box; she also rang his special bell vigorously to call attention to her good deed.

"No use," I would say; "you don't suppose he does not see you borrowed that coin? The deed of merit is marked up to me, or whoever is rash enough to lend to you."

"Do you think so? Then henceforth I will borrow first and ring him up afterwards! I am going to make all the merit I can while I am in this country, because if coming back is the case, I will come back a Jap—unless I choose to be a bird."

"You will come back a poor hard-worked little 'Tweenie,'" I said, "to show you that point of view."

"Shouldn't stay a Tweenie long. Don't you perceive I am not made to be trampled on!"

"Helen, don't talk like this to Gyp! Really you do encourage her nonsense! One might think you actually believe all these—these yarns!" Cousin Mary frowned at me and shook her head, and Gyp chuckled with unholy delight.

"She is a snake in the grass, isn't she? I found her out long ago. But I can't let you two quarrel any more. Come along, I want my tea. Oh, blessed Toki San, go and collect the rickshaw men, and we will refresh ourselves with a tiny cup of the honourable tea at that wistaria-covered little tea-place, before going home to have it in more solid English fashion."

These little wayside tea-houses are a great feature of the country places. They somewhat resemble very large four-posters, and have a very crude red blanket spread on the slightly raised floor to accommodate the squatting customer. We usually sat on the edge and enjoyed watching our coolies sip the tiny cups, take two or three whiffs from the tiny pipe, and so fortify themselves for further

efforts. Rice and uninviting seaweed formed their more solid food, and it certainly gave them muscle and a good wind. Other tea-places of a grander character spread out their red blankets beneath beautiful canopies of wistaria, long lovely trails of delicate mauve, some five feet long; one sat most blissfully beneath this ideal shelter, sipping the mild infusion of tea, and the breeze stirred the long trails and filled the air with that most delicious of all perfumes. We do not know what wistaria is in our isles of the northern seas. I wish we had started our history with Amaterasu Omikami, the blessed Sun-Goddess.

At dinner that evening Gyp informed us she wanted a new sensation, so she had arranged one with Tokimoto. If we were good we might come too. The boy and his party were going.

"But where, Gyp?" I asked. "And the boy is no attraction—to us!"

The boy was a rather good-looking but thoroughly badly brought up youth of nineteen or twenty, and his party consisted of a fussy, futile little aunt-in-charge and a middle-aged tutor, who was growing daily greyer with Miss Metcalf's indecisions and the boy's vagaries. Gyp had taken the boy a little in hand. They had met in the small shop off the hotel entrance hall, where the unwary traveller is beguiled into spending many yens during an empty evening "much more better" reserved for other occasions. Tokimoto had warned us, that was his duty; but it was not his business to spoil sport for the two purring little women and their slim brother who ran the informal shop. So when we went in, he said nothing, but laughed at our purchases afterwards.

Gyp had heard the boy announce in a very high falsetto voice that he had just ordered a rickshaw and intended to ride in it down Piccadilly. This

flight of imagination appealed to Gyp, and when he asked her to ride with him, it was being made to hold two, she promptly accepted. "Auntie" had looked incredibly shocked, for we had not been introduced in orthodox fashion. Unfortunately, her room adjoined Gyp's, and Gyp could not avoid hearing her injunctions to "Bobby" "not to talk to that tall girl who smoked." And "Bobby" said naughty words and talked all the more. Gyp, who had at first sang and whistled to apprise "Auntie" of her neighbourhood, but without effect, listened and enjoyed the lecture and the answers, and was more gracious to Bobby in consequence.

There being, however, no amusement for us in that connection, we waited to hear what else was held in store.

"A lovely treat," said Gyp; "and after so much learning, Helen needs relaxation. There is nothing to read up about in it, for which 'Oh let us be joyful!' And, Mother, this is something nice for you. I told the tall parson he might come with us; he is rather a lost sort of soul, alone and guideless, so Toki and I have been kind to him. Toki will bring round rickshaws after dinner, so don't eat for long."

"But where are we going, Gyp, where?"

"Why, to the Cherry-Blossom Dance, of course! Haven't I been telling you that for the last ten minutes?"

We were landed near Theatre Street, a narrow little street hung with many bright lanterns, and where even rickshaws are forbidden. Many and enticing were the invitations to other places of amusement—dancers, fencers, jugglers—but Tokimoto shook a serene head at all of them. "Much more better theatres in Tokyo—we seeing Myako Odori, oser sings poor places." So at the door of the "Myako Odori," "Imperial Dance," performed only in the month of cherry blossom, we left our

shoes, and tripped up the steps into a large room, round whose walls a crowd of very grave and silent Japanese were squatting in front of a very low table.

"We having 'tea ceremonial' first. Not paying more, and ladies liking 'tea ceremonial.'"

It was impossible to stand up in the centre of this expectant throng, and as all wall places were occupied, I flopped down promptly where I stood. The others followed my example, and Toki looked relieved, as he squatted near. Our parson did not know what to do with his long legs. You need a kimono to squat in, or, *faut de mieux*, a dress does very well. Any little adjustment of joints takes place so neatly beneath convenient folds, but the poor trouser-clad members do not know which way to dispose of themselves. He looked at his knees woefully.

"Never mind," said Gyp; "it will only give them a well-prayed look. *You* needn't mind that!"

Our European centre was soon enlarged, for into the room hurried Master Bobby, Auntie, and the tutor.

"Here you are, that's ripping!" and he banged down by Gyp. "My word, I wish they would give one chairs. I hate this sitting on the floor like a lot of kids."

"Bobby dear, come over here by me." "Auntie" had rolled down, first on one side, then on the other, and their guide, a most monkey-like little man, had steadied her up gravely, and now squatted near with anxious looks.

"No, I shan't, Auntie; I like being just where I am. You can talk to Hammers. That's what I call our monkey man," he continued, turning to Gyp; "his real name is yards long, but starts off like that. I say, this is death on trousers, and I have got on my best evening suit. Aren't you jolly glad you're a girl?"

"Always was," said Gyp.

"No, I say, not really!"

Nothing could exceed the interest we were exciting, and a terrible feeling that we were the performance, and did not know our parts, seized me.

"What shall we do? We ought to play at something. Look at their eager faces! Shall it be 'Hunt the slipper'? We look ready for that."

"But we haven't a slipper between us!" The boy's voice rose higher than ever, and Toki's gravity, always severely tried by "voice like pig," fairly gave way. We all joined in, a regular burst, and over the graver faces lining the wall a grin broke, slowly and surely, and spread from ear to ear.

"Auntie" alone looked vexed, and pretended not to hear Cousin Mary's polite little remark on our absurd position.

"Hama," she said sternly, "I thought you said we were going to see a dance of cherry blossoms."

"Tea first," said Hamagowara, also sternly. He feared his party was not showing off to advantage; in fact, his young gentleman was a standing joke with the other guides.

But we were spared the necessity of providing further entertainment, for the real thing began to begin; very slowly, and with very small beginnings truly.

A door opened, and in walked one small girl, then another, and it closed.

These tiny maidens of some ten years were dressed in very beautiful cherry-coloured crêpe de Chine kimonos, embroidered and stamped in coloured flowers. This stamping on silks, crapes, and cottons is one of the prettiest ornamentations used in Japan, and the old stamping, we were always told, was getting very rare. The dresses we saw at this Cherry-Blossom Dance were amongst the most beautiful anywhere in Japan. The black hair of each child was drawn up in a big bow with

bright artificial flowers in the front. The pretty Anglo-Japanese fashion of big rosettes of flowers behind the ears is apparently reserved for export only. The small faces were painted white, and this thick coating was carried down into the neck in the Vandyke points strictly enjoined by Japanese cosmetic science. This brings out the deep colour of the skin very markedly, and the white mask helps the small face to keep the absolutely impassive look which is required. Little white linen tabi covered the small feet, and they moved slowly, so slowly, as though the advance was to be imperceptible.

They carried a small plate with a big white dough-like cake on it, and with a low bow presented it to the nearest guest.

As they retired two others entered, and the relay was slowly but steadily kept up.

"Oh, let us ask them to hurry up; they will never get to us on the floor. Toki, what is 'hurry up' in Japanese?"

Tokimoto began the sentence which would take the polite form of "honourable preparations quickly making condescend" when translated, but he checked himself.

"Tea ceremonial going 'ery slow, Miss Gyp not asking 'hully up,' plenty time."

Tokimoto seldom mixed his "l's" and his "r's," but excitement got the better of him. We were so conspicuous, and he knew Gyp was both daring and impatient. When our turn arrived, the two small maidens knelt on the floor in front of Gyp and the boy, deposited the cakes, and then bent lower and lower till their little foreheads touched the floor.

"You little dears!" said Gyp. "Arigato," which is "thank you." The boy tried to bow low too, and almost rolled over; and Tokimoto's gravity was again upset, while the white masks gave one little twitch and then drew back into the perfect

repose of a statue, but the bright eyes answered Gyp's Japanese word with a quick glance.

"We are treated like the king and queen," said "Bobby." But the deep obeisance was not only reserved for them, we on the floor were all equally honoured.

Then another pause, and we all sat looking at our buns, till the door slowly opened and "young lady geisha who making tea ceremonial" entered.

If the little girls had scarcely moved, what can be said of this older one? She glided like a glacier, and about as fast, to a tiny stool in front of a big urn, and seated herself after a deep bow. She was also clad in the loveliest pink kimono embroidered and shaded, and a grand obi kept the folds tight round her slim figure. She had the same impassive white face and the elaborate head ornaments, and after duly gazing at each implement in front of her, she began her operations.

This tea ceremonial is very old and very full of meaning. It was evolved by one of Japan's most famous rulers, Hidéyoshi, in the sixteenth century, and was intended to promote pleasant social intercourse, extreme politeness of manners, and to make tea-drinking one of the national customs. Grandly has the wish fathered the fact, and though it is possible to drink tea without quite so much "ceremonial" attached to it, this "counsel of perfection" still exists, and in the pretty tea-houses in every well-ordered garden there is one room where this now almost religious ceremony is occasionally performed. In the school where the girls are instructed in the evolution of the Cherry Dance they also learn the intricate movements necessary for this frail ceremony, and as each movement—whether the hand is moved from right to left, up or down, the little bowl placed one side or the other of the urn, the "honourable hot water" boiled for the third

time, and the green tea powder whisked in such and such a way at the exact moment—holds some special meaning to the initiated mind, it is not a light and airy nothing to attempt, this particular form of tea-making. Our "young lady geisha" omitted nothing from the fullest ritual, and the slowness and solemnity could not possibly have been excelled.

"Doesn't it remind you of the way they go on in some High Churches?" Gyp asked the parson in a half-whisper.

"I fail to see any resemblance," he answered, rather coldly.

The steaming bowl was now taken by one little girl and presented to the nearest guest, the "young lady geisha" bowed low and retired. Then quite quickly the little girls re-entered, and each guest soon had a cup of tea presented to him. But in a real social gathering of the "tea ceremony" the first bowl would have been handed round as a loving cup.

Bobby took a gulp at his fragrant green mixture —it looked like very thin spinach soup—spluttered, put it down, and said quite audibly, "It's beastly!"

We looked at ours rather doubtfully after this, but both "Toki" and "Hama" were sipping with true enjoyment, and all round the room a look of blissful content appeared above the reverently raised bowls.

I tried mine: it was bitter and highly scented, but left a rather pleasingly sweet taste. Like many other specially correct things, it requires a slight initiation to be really appreciated.

Gyp, who began life with a taste for caviare and oysters, voted it "not bad," and reproved the boy for his grimace.

The white buns, we noticed, were pocketed whole by the guests; Bobby dug his teeth into his, at Gyp's request, and they stuck there.

"Lor', it's just a sickening sticky lump of dough. Try yours."

"Not much. Your face is quite enough."

But Toki produced a paper and wrapped up his party's buns with care.

Then the whole room rose like one man, for a small door had been opened, and there was one breathless rush to the theatre.

We struggled to our feet; most of us found them off duty, sleeping!

"Oh, pins and needles!" shouted Bobby.

"Bobby, help me," cried "Auntie."

"Allow me," said our parson to Cousin Mary, and then one of his legs seemed to go, and he gripped at it as though he feared to find it gone.

Toki and Hama got us under way at last, and we followed the Japs, who, it must be confessed, were pushing ahead quite like an English pit audience.

"And they say these fellers are always so jolly polite," growled the boy. "Here, let me make a way for you."

"No, you don't," said Gyp, taking his arm. "I don't see why they shouldn't have front places; they got here first!"

The part of the theatre in which we found ourselves when we emerged from a narrow passage was the dress circle, but there was no other, and there were no seats. The matted floor was slightly raised towards the back. The Japs had arranged themselves in parties clustering near the front, but we were soon all squatting peacefully with but one row of little grey women in front of us, and over their small heads it was not difficult to see. Each group drew towards it the hibachi (brazier), which is always placed conveniently near every guest in every habitation, and which gives him the light for his small pipe. Men and women drew out their dainty implements and lighted up, the boy produced

his cigarette case. Gyp looked round; the little women in front of us were occupied with their pipes.

"It's the fashion here for ladies," she said quietly; but the parson would not follow her example.

"Look at 'Auntie's' face," Gyp whispered. "Isn't it worth it? Oh, I wish you were not such an old-fashioned idiot, and could smoke too! After all my lessons, you might just try."

"Gyp, you are not a good girl," I answered.

"No, thank Heaven!"

The stalls—or where they usually are—was all pit, and was being quickly filled with those who had not been admitted to the "tea ceremonial." They were a poorer class: mothers with babies bound on their backs, little boys and girls, and many fathers; they pattered in, squatted down, and looked round and up at us with serene enjoyment.

The curtains in front of the stage, which extended half-way round the two sides, were among the most lovely pieces of work we met in Japan.

"'Ery old—not buying now," Toki answered my admiration; and you certainly will not find them at Liberty's.

They were drawn gently aside, and the band behind the side division struck up a queer and irresponsible kind of tune, on some of the quaintest instruments we had yet seen.

There was the well-known biwa, like a guitar, and the samisen, like a square-shaped banjo; an hour-glass was turned into a drum, and the long koto, like an outspread elongated zither; and all the dear pretty little geisha girls beat and tummed with quaint energy, and lifted up their little voices and—well, we should not call it singing, but—I speak as a fool—if you pitch your voice somewhere behind your teeth, and let it go up and down as it feels inclined, and do not in the least trouble about what your little hands are doing—or your neighbour's

either, for that matter—you get a slight idea of Japanese music as it sounds to unaccustomed European ears.

"Isn't it refreshing? so absolutely spontaneous! Do you think they need to practise together?"

"We must go and buy some Japanese instruments. I know where to get some," said the boy.

"Rather," answered Gyp. And Cousin Mary almost caught a gleam of sympathy in "Auntie's" eye.

Then the middle curtain parted, and from the side entrances the dancers slowly glided in: brightest kimonos of embroidered blue and cherry-coloured silk making long sinuous lines as they trailed on the ground, long sleeves falling from gently waving arms, which held aloof sprays of the dainty blossom.

This was no light and frolicsome dance of spring, with "trip it, trip it, trip it" as the refrain. The dancing at our Bangkok party had taught us the method of some Eastern dances, and here, though the convolutions of the dance never bordered on the grotesque, the smooth, silent gliding, the twisting of neck, arms, and wrists, formed the foundation of the dance. With slowest motion the blue and pink maidens glided and turned and bent; they waved now the cherry branch, now a fan, or merely their supple little hands, inside, outside, round and back again. Their mask-like faces never varied, their eyes never blinked, and in alternate pairs they moved in perfect unison.

Behind them the scenery changed. From summer, with its suggestive tea-house in green and verdant garden, we passed to autumn and its wealth of maple ruddiness and chrysanthemum splendour; then a glistening winter scene took its place, while still the cherry maidens circled and turned and swayed, and the band twittered on. Then the spring burst on us, the snow shutters and screens flapped down and under, and up and round came

THE CHERRY-BLOSSOM DANCE.

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the glories of the cherry blossom. No trap-doors or wonderful mechanism, but just a quick change of overhanging boughs, and sliding panels from the wings, all done so noiselessly, and fitted so skilfully, that even Drury Lane might applaud. Our audience did so, heartily, while one or two little black figures—the colour suggests to you that you are not intended to see them, and it is bad taste to do so—crept round, adjusted a few details, and hung the last touches of glittering lights from the pink-laden boughs.

"'Ery good that is—is not?" said Tokimoto, with real satisfaction, and we praised and applauded to his evident content. Then the dancers gradually withdrew, bowing and bending to the last, the twitter ceased as the curtains were slowly drawn, and we let the rush of little linen boots precede us as we straightened ourselves up.

"Must go," says Toki, "oser peoples coming, one more time dancing to-night."

"Let's stay, then," exclaimed Gyp and the boy simultaneously. Oh, these young people! they do not know how to safeguard their own joys. Repeat a pleasure and you grow weary of it. But Gyp was in no mood for words of wisdom; we had to promise to come again another night before the boy and Toki and the parson and the tutor got her on her feet.

Then we found our shoes and our rickshaws and were rushed home through the star-lit night, Gyp and the boy betting on their respective coolies; and Gyp pocketed the boy's yen with triumph, and invited him to a game of bridge; but "Auntie" had something very important to say to him, and Cousin Mary took us off to bed.

CHAPTER X

THE PROCESSION OF GEISHAS

IT was still April, and still occasionally quite cold, but the green tassels hanging from the willow trees were spreading into leaves, the country seen from our balcony, or at closer quarters from the running rickshaws, was a more full and deeper green, the cherry blossom was less frequent—in fact, only a cluster of the double variety round some torii (temple gate), or a chance lonely tree, remained to tell of that first rush and blush of springtime. Azaleas were coming out, and the wistaria was daily increasing in length and sweetness. Some days the sun shone with all his might, but that did not mean a fire would not be grateful and comforting by evening, or that the next morning clogs, yellow umbrellas, and streaming skies would not be the order of the day.

And we were to have the procession of geishas in old-fashioned costume. "What if it rains?" we asked our guide and friend.

"If raining, procession next day, not walking in rain, girls' dresses spoiling."

And this excellent proviso holds good for all processions in this land of sense and leisure. If not one day, then another! what matter? Why fuss and fume and spoil a show by taking it under streaming skies? Wait for the day; and the day may withhold itself as long here as the other side of the world.

But our geisha day shone bright and hot, and as Tokimoto ordered the rickshaws for two o'clock, we devoted the morning to letter-writing and gave him leave of absence. Not that Tokimoto ever strayed far; we were his business, and he seemed to enjoy doing us thoroughly.

In the guides' room he met his friends, and they discussed their patrons, their places, and doubtless other things which Tokimoto hid from us. But he commented freely on our fellow-travellers, and was outspoken in his praise or blame. Of the boy we knew he disapproved, and he told us that Hamagowara, the guide, "not liking young gentleman making much noise, peoples looking." The boy had evidently not attained to the Japanese standard of manners.

Another traveller, an American woman, provoked Toki's wholesale condemnation. She had a decided voice, and no objection to the world at her elbow knowing her plans or views. Standing at the office counter, she had fixed her day's arrangements, and her husband—she was accompanied by one; they are more common in Japan than Europe—had rather meekly fallen in with her wishes. Even their own guide had condemned the submissiveness of the husband, and Tokimoto went further, he assured us, and disapproved of the lady. He told us so as we all met on the balcony outside our bedroom after breakfast and arranged for the day.

"That American lady—hair all so," and Tokimoto waved thin fingers in a halo round his black sleek head,—"dress 'ery much so," and his hands billowed round his narrow person,—"she 'ery proud—she always talking *her* way, her husband he saying 'yes.'"—No pen could express the meekness of that "yes" as mimicked by Tokimoto. —"She saying, 'I *must* go,' 'I *won't* do sat,' 'I'll have you come.' He not strong man, he just

saying 'yes.' American 'omen like that—I not liking it."

"Women ought to do as they are told, ought not they, Toki?" said Gyp firmly and gravely.

Toki turned to her quickly, and his hearty "yes" was half checked by the mischief he met in her eyes. Still she seemed serious, and continued, "I expect Mrs. Toki does as you tell her—always—doesn't she?"

"Yes,"—with decision,—"Japanese 'omen always doing like sat, good. Japanese 'omen learning obedience laws. Obeying parents, sen obeying husband, if he dying obeying biggest son. Much more better 'omen learning sat, much more peace in house at home."

"That's your point of view, Toki. Now I will show you another. Your dear little baby girl will grow big, and by that time Japanese women will know about American and English women; they will say, 'Why should I always do what some man likes? Why not what *I* like myself?'—that much better from the *women's* point of view, Toki. Why, fancy if my Mother had to obey her eldest son! Goodness me!—she would be sitting by the fire at home, spinning, or knitting his socks; and then we should none of us be travelling in Japan, and you would not have this nice party to guide! So there, Toki!"

"I dunno," said Toki, "I dunno 'bout English ladies. But Japanese 'omen not saying so—sey liking more better Japanese ways."

"But they won't always, Toki. Japan is very near America. American women will teach them."

"No, no!" cried Toki, in real alarm; and Cousin Mary interposed—

"Of course not. Don't mind what Miss Gyp says. She is trying to tease you. I wish she were more obedient herself."

"No use saying that, Mummie. Toki only thinks it entirely *your* fault I am not. But I am not so bad, am I, Toki? You see I am so much bigger than she is, I can't always obey her, and she *likes* doing what I want to do. You will *like* doing what your daughter tells you——" Gyp said this persuasively.

"My baby! Oh no. Japanese peoples keeping like Japanese," and Toki swept the gravity from his face and burst out laughing in answer to Gyp's smile at his vehemence. Then he turned to me as to a sensible pal.

"Miss Gyp he 'ery nice young lady, one day he marrying strong man, and making good wife, good moser."

"Yes," said Gyp, "he must be very strong. I want him to be able to beat me. I should love a husband who could beat me; otherwise I shall beat him, Toki."

Again Toki laughed. "Miss Gyp he like Japanese strong 'omen. Miss Helen buying print of strong 'omen, standing so!"

"How did the strong woman show her strength, Toki?" asked Gyp, with interest.

"Oh, she fighting like Samurai, just like man. Anybody weak, she helping. But that old-fashioned times, Shogun times. Now only men fighting. Perhaps we seeing that play in theatre at Tokyo. Danjuro he doing strong 'oman."

"Grand!" said Gyp. "Let us get on to Tokyo; I am dying for a theatre. But—what is the time?" and Gyp sprang from the balcony rail on which she had been sitting, rather endangering its slight woodwork, tossed her cigarette end down, and swept into her room, saying, "I have not a minute to lose."

Cousin Mary looked at the still burning end, and called "Gyp." I suppressed further flame with a determined foot, saying, "I know that girl will

cause a fire before we have done with Japan. Let us always remember to take rooms at jumping distance from the ground. And, Cousin Mary, *do* sleep with your money bag near you. We may not have time to save anything. Think how this wood and paper would burn!"

Cousin Mary's one terror in Japan was the thought of fire and earthquakes. They naturally very often accompany each other, the earthquake going first and upsetting internal arrangements.

"Helen, don't be horrid! Can't you make Gyp more careful? I *did* hope your influence would be good, but she is so——"

Cousin Mary put down her pen; she was writing at the open window of her room looking over the billowy hills and the blueness of this fine day. Tokimoto vanished when he saw he was not wanted.

"My dear, it is Gyp's influence, not mine, that is telling! I study her, as she is, not judging her by any preconceived pattern I may have formed of the young girl as she ought to be. Gyp would call it 'an open mind'! Why, even in Japan Gyp would have been a 'chivalrous lady' or 'strong woman' in Shogun times. That must have meant great force of character when one considers the three Obediences."

"They are a strange people, but very attractive. Helen, do you know about this geisha procession we are going to see? Do you understand about the geishas?—they are quite—well, proper, aren't they?"

"Oh dear, yes; and these are the higher class, I believe, the beauties, in the dress of 'old-fashioned times,' as Toki says."

"I did not ask Tokimoto before Gyp, for he might say something awkward, but I spoke to that clergyman in the reading-room, and he is going, so it must be all right."

"Of course it is," I answered, with the assurance born of ignorance; and then we both settled down to letter-writing, supposing Gyp to be doing the same.

We had at last had news from Bangkok, and I felt cooler when I heard that the rains had broken there earlier than usual, and the big tanks were overflowing with water, and Jim could enjoy a fresh-water bath every day. The cholera scare, too, was at an end as far as the Europeans were concerned, and no other victims had been claimed. Jim wrote of lonely drives beneath a glorious padouk avenue, and of the lavish flowering of all the trees I had longed to see in their full beauty. It all seemed so far away, more like a faint memory of a former incarnation than actual happenings of but a few weeks ago; but Jim's letter brought back the East—the real hot and gorgeous East—where palm trees and blue sky strike a note of full satisfaction—to me at least. Japan, however, had taken possession of me. I could only wish Jim were with us, not we with Jim; and then I wondered what the thick letter to Gyp might contain. Gyp had overflowed no more since that deep dark night on board the *Loo Sok*. She had scarcely referred to Bangkok, except to point to her mother as a proof of the wisdom of our departure, and to Jim but casually—I hoped his heart was as whole as hers. And then I began to wonder why I hoped that either heart were whole.

An early lunch brought no Gyp, and in her room reigned the usual chaos. The little house-boys looked on it as a curious European arrangement of the "honourable Gyp San," and politely left it her way; but no presiding spirit was to be found.

Tokimoto was summoned, and was concerned. He went in search of the straying member of his flock, and returned to us looking, Cousin Mary

thought, very anxious, I declared very amused—his queer dark eyes answered to our respective feelings.

"Miss Gyp gone out in rickshaw. He gone wis young gentleman, voice so funny—all high up. Guide not gone wis. Rickshaw boy talk English, few words. Miss Gyp she go, not saying she go?"

Cousin Mary would fain have assumed the virtue of knowledge, or even forgetfulness, but she was too transparent, and I was no help, for I laughed. "That naughty girl! what on earth has she gone after? She was settling up something the other night with that boy, but I really did not know what. Oh, it is all right, Toki; she will be back directly. We will start for the procession as soon as she returns."

Tokimoto looked at "Madame"—yes, she smiled, so he might do so too, and he did. The triple law of the Obediences did not apply to Gyp, and looking on her as a modern specimen of the "chivalrous woman," she was amusing. Assuredly she had gone as protectress to that poor specimen of manhood, the "young gentleman with voice so"—and Toki was apt to send forth a terrible falsetto sound.

"I shan't wait for her," said Cousin Mary sternly. "We will start at two punctually, Helen."

"Do you think she will follow us, or shall I stay behind and bring her along?"

"No, certainly not. Why should you? There will be a crowd, and you know I don't want to be separated from both you and Gyp. We will go on together."

After a brief pause: "All the same, I do not see how Gyp can come on alone?"

"She will have the boy, he is sure to be coming too, and the hotel has booked all the seats for its people together."

"Really, Helen—oh, *do* be sensible! Can I leave Gyp with that—that silly boy! Of course *I* must

wait for her. You go on with Toki; yes, that is best. You take Toki, and I will bring Gyp. I shall certainly scold her."

But I knew Cousin Mary better, and we finally left Toki and intrusted ourselves to our "boys." They cried "Yes, yes" many times to Tokimoto's directions to give us confidence in their guidance, and away we rattled.

A turn of the road brought us full tilt into Gyp, and caused a halt. She was smoking a cigarette serenely, and the boy behind her was doing the same. They looked happy and unconcerned.

"Hullo! where are you off to? Oh, the procession! I am going to get some lunch first. Left me Toki? That's all right. Get front seats, Helen, and sit on two till I come. Of *course* I'll eat some lunch, Mummie; why, I am ravenous! We have had a ripping morning. I've spent yens and yens, and oh, Helen! I have bought such a kimono! Mr. Bobby has been going it too." The two parties began to divide, the coolies trotting gently on. Cousin Mary called back, "Don't be long, dear," and Gyp shouted, "Mind you keep me a good place," while the boy suddenly yelled in high falsetto, "I am bringing my party. We will all come together." And everybody, from coolie to baby, within hearing grinned from ear to ear.

When Cousin Mary and I were allowed to come alongside she was visibly relieved.

"But I shall tell Gyp not to be so thoughtless. She really doesn't *think*, you know. Of course she would not worry if we changed places, and that is what she tells me; but then she is not a mother! I wonder what sort of mothers these modern girls will make? You don't worry much either, Helen."

"Over Gyp? Oh dear, no! I never met anyone better able to do her own worrying, if it has to be done."

"But I *must* look after her, Helen; she is very young and really very ignorant, for all she assumes such endless knowledge. Do you think other people think her very—well—very modern?"

"I am sure they do, and she is, and she wants to be," was my comforting reply; but what we all meant exactly by that capacious word "modern," and whether it comprehended virtues or vices untold, or weird developments of the two combined, is more than I can say.

Our coolies finally landed us near the long winding main street through which the procession was to pass, and they cheerfully pushed a way through the crowd of little people until we reached the seats placed outside the shops and houses, and which lined the street as far as we could see.

Our particular seats had been arranged by the manager of our hotel, and all the hotels had done the same for their guests, so a good sprinkling of Europeans were to be seen; but the crowd and those squatting or standing beside other narrow enclosures down the street were Japanese, and Japanese of only the working or shopkeeping class. Very rarely a Japanese gentleman, known by his ceremonious over-garment of a broad trouser, like a very full divided skirt, passed down the street, and as Tokimoto explained, "Gentlemans, sey coming, but Japanese ladies, oh no!" Country people with their round and tanned faces bustled in to see the show, and were as easily distinguishable as would be our own country bumpkins.

The long, narrow, refined type of face with which we in Europe are mostly acquainted is by no means the only one to be found in Japan, and is generally met with amongst the upper or educated class.

Classes, however, have been rather mixed since the grand old Revolution that reformed the ancient kingdom; but the real labouring class, those

whom the reformation left much as it found them, have round, cheerfully plebeian countenances. The little maidens have rosy cheeks—none so yellow after all—shiny oblique eyes, black hair done up in fine bows and buns, stiffened out, and the broad pathway of the comb carefully shown in furrows, some bright flower or pin stuck gaily in; the modest coloured kimono wrapped from left to right, with a broad and sometimes fine obi tied in that ridiculous box-shaped bow at the back. Plenty of children were there, either strapped on the maternal back or standing firm on their own wooden clogs, and old men and women of the indefinite age that seems to succeed youth. A woman thinks herself old after twenty, and she looks it after thirty.

And up and down the narrow sunlit street—for a real hot sun came out to see the show—these eager black eyes turned with uttermost content and patience for several hours, finding in the arrival of the foreigners quite sufficient enjoyment till the real thing began.

Cousin Mary and I waited in the front row for an hour and a half before Gyp and her escort arrived. As she took possession of her guarded seat she remarked—

"I found out the show did not really begin till four o'clock, but I thought you and Mother might as well be in time and keep the seats. Toki likes to be so dreadfully punctual, he has been having several blue fits to get me off before. 'Madame *not* liking—peoples taking all the chairs—Miss Helen *'ery* cross—' that came at last; but I said you had a heavenly temper really, Helen, and only launched out occasionally for my good. There, was not that sweet of me?"

"I don't believe a word of it. And you are a selfish little wretch not to have told us we should have to wait so long."

"Oh, but, Helen, Gyp did not know until she got back. She could not have told us."

"Oh yes, I did. I did not think it would hurt you to sit quiet for a bit. Nice and restful for you two. And we certainly should not have got front seats if we had all been late, and then Helen could not take the photographs I want! The boy told me this morning, so I went off with him to look at some kimonos. I knew you would go on, and leave Toki for me."

Cousin Mary turned her back on her delightfully frank daughter, and I resumed my conversation with the man on my other side, with whom we had arrived at exchanging "good-mornings" in the hotel. But Gyp refused to see that we were offended.

"Turn this way, Mum dear, I want to talk to you. Helen is engrossed with a man. I want to tell you about the scrumptious kimono I ordered this morning. I bought one, a beauty, for you to give Ethel; you must take her back something nice, you know. Wasn't that kind of me?" I turned to look how Cousin Mary took this information, for I was only giving one ear to the man, but Gyp rebuked me.

"No, Helen, I am going to tell Mother the price, and you are not to hear. You must guess it. Go on talking."

My neighbour was an English business man, much travelled in the Colonies and America. He had his own standard of beauty, with which he had been regaling me, and I was really quite ready to hear the price of Gyp's kimono.

"There's a lot of talk about this country," he had said. "People go into raptures—or pretend they do; it's just a fashion. But, after all, what is there? Scenery? Why, what are their mountains after the Rockies, or even the Adirondacks? Nothing to brag about, not even Fuji; just a few hills. And

waterfalls!—such a talk about waterfalls! Have they got a Niagara? They can't come anywhere near it. Cherry blossom! Well, it's pretty, but you needn't go farther than Kent if you want to see cherry blossom; and sensible trees too, that go into fruit afterwards, and to my mind that's the best part of a cherry tree. Bless me! why do we all come to Japan? I'm on my way home from Australia, and thought I might as well look in. Perhaps I can help keep the other fools out now. What does it all amount to, anyhow? Art, now—their lacquer, china, pictures, work? Look here, let me give you a word of advice: don't you buy a blessed thing here, save your money, and when you get home, go to Liberty's, and you can buy the whole show for half the price. Fact that. I got my wife to send me prices of lacquer boxes and things before I came here, and—what do you think?—a lacquer glove-box, a good big one, will be two shillings at Liberty's, and here, imagine it! that little bowing fraud in at—Hio something—the big shop, you know it? all the guides are in with him, get their percentage—Oh, it's a grand system for defrauding the gulls who travel round—well, he asked me ten yen—ten yen! that's one pound—for just such a box!"

This long speech had been broken into by occasional remarks from my deprecating lips, but he sailed on with his argument.

"How long have you been here?" I asked, in sudden answer to his last remark.

"Five days. I've done Kobe—Osaka—seen that exhibition there?—only thing worth seeing in Japan, and it's mostly European, of course. I've been to Nara, had two days here at Kyoto, just stopped over because they said this procession was unique—if one waits two hours for it, it ought to be. The girls take their time with their titivation, that's sure; but that is not peculiar to Japan, eh?

I'm going on to Yokohama, Tokyo; just look in at Nikko and see if those temples are worth the talk they make about them. Bet you a fiver they aren't. Then there's a place, 'Me-an'—dear me, 'Me-an'—most of the names are really outlandish——"

"Yes," I said; "why on earth can't they call them Boston, or York, or Sydney? 'Myanoshita'—how ridiculous!"

"Ah, now you are laughing! Well, I will let the names pass. I shall soon forget 'em. But they tell me Murray's man raves about that place. So I am just going to see what it is worth."

"I wouldn't," I said. "You go straight to Yokohama—it is scarcely Japan at all, I hear—and you stay right there until the next boat sails. Take it, and go as fast as you can to Niagara. I suppose it is the biggest thing in the world, and there is the biggest advertisement of some biscuit or the other, that can be seen for miles, just over the Canadian side. Won't that satisfy you?"

I believe I spoke with energy. But I was getting tired, and the sun was very hot, baking down on our unprotected backs, and we had been there, after a hasty lunch, for two hours.

My companion broke into most hearty laughter.

"I'm not at all sure you are not right, though you don't mean it; but I won't take your advice unless you will take mine, and not be gulled into buying a single thing whilst you are here! As to advertisements, don't you like them?"

"No."

"Ha, ha! Well, and how about these little Japs, then? Ever see such little devils for advertising? Oh! I admire them for it; it's my own line. Shows go, and they have 'go' and no mistake. You can hardly see their bits of mountains for the big letters advertising goodness knows what. I don't believe Niagara can beat that, anyhow."

I felt a good deal depressed. It was true. On the fresh green of the hillside it was not an infrequent thing to see gigantic, bold black hieroglyphics in the Chinese characters announcing some terrible thing—mustard or soap, I used to fancy.

"We have taught them that," I sighed. "We do harm wherever we go."

"Not a bit of it, not a bit of it. Progress—that's what we bring. The British flag! Trade! The Bible! Progress from first to last. They don't need the whisky bottle yet. They have their saké—beastly stuff!—but they will come on in time to something better. Progress—that's the thing we bring."

I never was so thankful for the diversion of tea in my life, and here was Tokimoto guiding the tray in my direction, and saying in soothing tones—

"Time for tea—just—procession starting but going slow, walking on geta, 'ery slow, one step taking one minute, 'ery difficult. Geta so high,"—indicating some eight to ten inches.

Gyp turned to me.

"Have you your camera fixed? Do be ready; and do have a fresh glass, not one you have used already, like you did——"

"Oh, don't talk nonsense, Gyp! I don't take one on top of the other as a rule."

"What's the matter?—cross? And after my telling Toki you had a heavenly temper! I don't say you do as a rule, but as an exception. And I specially want a good one of these girls. Do you know anything about them?"

"Yes; they are the higher class geisha, dressed up in the old-fashioned dresses."

"Oh," remarked Gyp, "that all?"

Gyp's tone suggested further knowledge, so I asked—

"Well, what more do you know?"

"Not now." Gyp shook her head enigmatically. "I only wanted to know how much you and Mother really knew about them. It's not for her ears anyway."

All heads were turned expectantly in one direction, down the long narrow street, narrowed now to some six feet across, for the small pen-like enclosures on either side took up some feet of room, and were as full as they could be, and from the windows above looked forth black, shiny heads and black, eager eyes.

First came two little girls between eight and ten years old, in brightest, prettiest kimonos, and very elaborate ornaments of flowers and pins covering the front of the hair. Their little faces were whitened, and the lips, nostrils, and corners of the eyes painted red, while a narrow black line emphasised the eyebrows. A taller girl followed them, and then a wonderfully made canopy of flowers was wheeled down by an old man. As they passed slowly another group appeared in the distance, and then another; all brilliantly dressed, and all walking calmly on, except when one very small processionalist, who took fright at the many eyes, lifted up her small voice and wept. A woman from the audience hurried forward and took her away through a side street. But these were the young girls, not the "beauties" for whom we waited. At last came one, slowly, slowly, in the distance, making her apparently painful advance on the troublesome geta. Yes, I knew her, she had walked out of one of the old prints, but the black lacquered clogs—geta—on which she moved were even taller, and she needed the occasional support of her quiet little waiting-maid, while an old man, holding a huge umbrella over her, studied every step with manifest anxiety. The small bare feet held on to, and moved the heavy, high clog by one velvet band

The Geisha Procession

A Smart Japanese Baby.

passed between the first and second toes, and so she executed what is called the "Figure of eight walk," placing one foot in front inwardly, then straightening it, bringing up the next in the same manner, and so very, very slowly moving forward. Her gorgeous garments were partly held up by herself, and partly by her maid. They were of richest brocade and most vivid colouring; while her obi, yards wide and yards long, was folded and wound round her, and finally tied in an enormous bow in front. Her small whitened face seemed to be cast in plaster, and was overshadowed by her elaborate coiffure, with a perfect halo of tortoise-shell pins and flowers at the back of it. And her expression—ah, I can never forget the expression of those whitened faces, as one by one they slowly passed through the gaping crowd, in the brilliant sunshine of happy Japan. Had I asked their names I should have heard such poetical affectations as "Brightness of Flowers," "Golden River," "Little Jewel," "Whiteness of Snow." And the painted lips could smile, perhaps it was their profession. But the eyes, glazed as they looked out on the bright day, hid something in silent defiance and endurance, and it was no "brightness" or "whiteness," no life of "flowers" that those eyes sought to hide.

Of all strange processions perhaps this that we had unwittingly come out to see is the strangest and the saddest that walks in the sunshine. This class of geisha girl—they bear another name, for the ordinary little geisha girl may sing and dance and earn your money with a light heart—lives in one specially separated part of every large Japanese city, and among the many regulations that govern her existence perhaps the one of a compulsory walk on certain occasions—celebrating the flower seasons! —is the most cruel. It is all rather a long and a

very sad story, and this is not the place to tell it. We certainly can throw no stones at this phase of Japanese social development, for the open daylight procession is the only time any poor "lotus in the mire" parades the streets. And let no one think that Japanese morality condones this kind of life, or makes no difference between the woman who wears her obi tied behind and those who tie them in front—a custom enforced by law; but this difference there is in the sad "Flowers," they very often take up their abode in the "Yoshiwara" quarter to redeem some debt of a parent, to whom an obedience that leads to absolute self-sacrifice is unhesitatingly given. Many a romantic story lies hidden behind the "Gate of the Willow"—weeping willow it must be. I have it very seriously against the learned Confucius, and his enforcement of unquestioning obedience on the part of a girl to her father, a wife to her husband, and a widow to her eldest son, that this doctrine in some strange way does absolutely obtain in countries affected by his teaching, and sometimes—as in this case—the beauty of obedience is lost in the unholiness of the demand, and the consent.

The strong, bright American woman, with whom her Japanese sister is bound to come more and more in contact, has much she will inevitably teach her, and the inbred devotion to duty of a thousand years will still keep the Japanese daughter, wife, and mother, without an exaggerated idea of her duty being primarily to herself; and while this procession may, and must, soon become a thing of the past, all it now stands for needs the courageous, honest, unflinching education of the women of the West, quite as much as of those of the East.

That evening Gyp came softly to my room.

"Did you see the photographs of that procession in the little shop downstairs?"

"No."

"Well, I did, and they had translated that word—Tayu—into unmistakable English. You can guess."

"But, Gyp, why did you not tell me?"

"You don't tell me everything, Helen; only what you think good for me. And I do as I am done by. Besides, I wanted to see it, and thought perhaps Mother might get scruples. You needn't tell her, it would only make her unhappy."

"I think their faces were awfully sad, Gyp; don't you?"

"Well—one could hardly tell with all that paint, and the trouble they had in walking on those horrid black stands." Gyp paused, and blew a few rings of smoke thoughtfully into the air. Then she said—

"I don't fancy they can have quite as good a time as those ladies who drive in the 'Bois' in Paris; but the French handle things with such a light touch and speak so openly. It astonished me at first. Of course in England we keep things dark, but that does not make them better. I shall have to understand, though."

"Why Gyp? there is no need to go into these things out of pure curiosity. They are too sad."

"Pure curiosity! Why, my dear Helen, do you suppose—— Goodness me! Now, isn't that typical! Mother might have said that, but *you* ought to know better."

I began to explain that I thought her still somewhat young, but she cut me short—

"Too young! There you are again! Oh, Helen, do recognise that age does not make one's character. You would not say I was too young to marry—yes, I suppose you would, though, if it were to—— But never mind that. Anyhow, don't you

see this is a vital point, and it is no use smearing it over, and saying how nice everything is, when it isn't! Books, English as well as French, don't mince matters—they don't pretend. But women do; they are always pretending. I would rather be bad and *real*, than be called *good* and forever pretending."

"But, my dear Gyp, it is not pretence not to talk of—of disagreeable subjects!"

"Yes it is; we pretend it is all right, that nothing can be helped—and there, that's it, we don't talk about it, we cover it up. I don't know how great a mess men have made of our social laws, but I think they must be pretty bad since they may not be spoken about."

"Well, dear, you can't reform them yet."

"Helen, you know you are pretending; you know you feel as I do, and you think you ought to say 'things' for my good. Well, I am going to bed now. Good-night; and don't tell Mother what I have told you, she simply can't understand these things. She is not modern enough."

Gyp and Cousin Mary evidently did not use the word "modern" in the same sense. I could not argue with Gyp, I was too much on her side. What Cousin Mary had felt, and I had thought, Gyp now said—whence was to come the reformer? Would it be the part of Gyp's daughter to act? For the evolution of this world is slow—but it is very sure, and somehow Gyp always made me hopeful.

Gyp had not long retired by the door before Cousin Mary peeped in at my open window-screen. She slid it a little farther apart and came in.

"Helen, I wish we had not gone to-day. It ought not to be allowed. That little man in the shop downstairs showed me photographs, and they were unmistakably labelled. I bought up all he had left for fear Gyp should see them. Don't

tell her. He said to me, '*'Ery* high class geisha—our *dooks* play wis 'em.' I think it simply horrid to—to make a parade of such things. I really wonder our Government does not insist, or represent it to this Government, that such things are shocking."

"Y-e-s," I said slowly; "and they might very well in return represent to our Government that certain things with us——"

"Oh yes; dear, dear, I fear we can't say much. Helen, how can we teach these people to be Christians when we fail so dismally ourselves? They must come and see London, and go away—laughing at us! I have thought, often, that they seemed better, more earnest over their Buddhism, more simple, more kindly, than we are. But, you see, the same sins flourish here, recognised and triumphant."

"It is because they don't follow Buddha, not because they do; and because we don't follow Christ, not because we do! We cannot reproach either Teacher with His followers."

"No; it takes a long time for the leaven to leaven the whole lump. Don't tell Gyp, anyway."

So our brilliant sunlit procession gave us all to think, and sad thoughts too. And through my dreams that night walked a richly dressed geisha girl on high and tedious geta, and by her side, holding her hand, walked an English sister—her face was painted too.

CHAPTER XI

THE ISE SHRINE

WE said good-bye to Kyoto with deepest regret. I had grown to love it as one loves Florence, but where my heart suggested the comparison my mind refused it. They cannot be compared: the stately white "Lily," the glittering Duomo, with all these dear, lowly, brown roofs and quaint Torii; but—they occupy a sacred niche together in my memory. I think it was a screen of roses bound them—a wooden palisade with some early, wide-open, single magenta roses, the very kind that serve for many a Botticelli background—and from that moment suggestions brought back the lovely Italian city, and the blue distance and soft spring breeze whispered that they too were from Bellosguardo.

But there were other places to visit, so we had to be moving, Nara, and Yamada, sounded very inviting.

Tokimoto conducted us to the station in time, depositing us in a waiting-room while he saw to luggage, etc. The room was rather full, and we were the only strangers. Gyp's inches attracted polite attention. I had begun to call her "O Mighty Atom," but her scorn withered me. "I would try and be a little original if you have any literary aspiration!"

Gyp deposited her bag and book and parasol by me, and wandered about. She enjoyed the "reverential awe"—that is what she called it—of the little

people looking up at her. Her parasol was a brilliant paper one, made in the country. We had compromised over it, for the lovely yellow umbrellas turned out to be so large, so bulky, that we could not add them to our luggage. As it rested beside me a thin yellow hand passed over it, and a discreet voice began—

"Misses' parasol Japanese? Very good, very nice sat is; you sink so?"

A gravely gowned Japanese, with close-cropped dark hair and bright eager eyes, sat down beside me. The waiting-rooms and stations generally might belong to our side of the world.

"Oh yes, I do—very nice!"

"You liking Japan, yes?"

"Very much."

"Now you going Nara?"

"Yes, just now." And, wishing to be equally polite, I inquired, "You have been to England?"

"No; I have been—" he caught hold of the verb, "America. I study law sere. Ten years gone by. But English I know. One time I come to London. Yes."

He pulled out the inevitable pocket-book, it is a large one, that holds everything, and is tucked inside the broad band that wraps the kimono together. "You please have my card. Sat all Japanese writing, my name, my profession."

I knew my manners, but cards failed me at that moment.

"Oh, Cousin Mary, your card-case, quick!" and I duly presented hers.

"I do hope they will all call on you, dear," I said as we followed Tokimoto to the train. "What a collection you will have."

There was the interesting policeman who had joined us on our journey to Osaka. He began by "May I ask?" and when Cousin Mary grasped

that it stood for "May I speak?" she granted permission, and he did ask—every conceivable question as to our names, ages, relations, and destination. Not to be outdone in politeness, we finally turned the tables, and found out he was a policeman, had learnt English at an American Mission night-school. He repudiated the thought of any change in his religion, but he and many other enterprising young Japanese thoroughly appreciated the chance of self-improvement. In fact, as we travelled round we collected cards and gave ours as liberally as though we were an advertising agency. I hope they will all call on Cousin Mary.

The covered-in station echoed with a curious sound as of heavy incessant hail. It was the patter of the clogs, and the number of poor people travelling always astonished us. But this was like an excursion; and indeed it was a favoured line, the Ise temples being the Mecca of Japan.

Tokimoto settled us and all our things, the porter came running with the little tea-case,—you can't live without tea, and Japan does not ask you to,—a wooden box with pot and cups, and the comforting "O Cha" (honourable tea) just made. Then he left, bowing and smiling at Toki's munificence, and so too did all our rickshaw coolies. "Goo'-bye, missie, goo'-bye." "Sayonara," we called, and off the train moved just as a young man bounded in; his bag and stick already occupied a corner of the square little carriage. The trains are corridor, so Tokimoto disappeared until it was time to bring us lunch, which he had brought in a basket from the hotel.

"Oh," sighed Gyp, "how I wish I could take my rickshaw boy with me! I never saw such a grin as when I tipped him."

"I told Toki to do that," said Cousin Mary.

"Well, Helen tipped hers."

"Oh, he has been so nice," I confessed.

"They have all been tipped twice then," said Cousin Mary.

"Except yours! He will think you horrid," said Gyp.

Then Cousin Mary had to own up too. She said she was the head, so it looked better. We had none of us been able to hold our hands.

The young man in the corner looked over his book at us, and there was a very cynical curl under his upward-turned moustache.

"German," whispered Gyp. "I hate him."

The young man went behind his book again. Gyp devoted herself to the tea-box, softly singing—

"'Tis a treason to our love,
And a sin to God above,
One iota to abate
Of a good, unreasoning hate."

Then she handed me a cup of tea.

I sipped the yellow infusion. "No, Gyp, it isn't good!"

"They *give* it you—you needn't go picking holes in it. Mother, have some?"

"No, dear."

"You must. You don't have to pay!"

"My dear Gyp!"

"Out of common politeness you are to take some. It will please Toki. Well, if you won't I shall have to drink out of all the cups to show we appreciate their kindness. Oh! I will leave one cup." Then she glanced at our fellow-traveller.

The book came down. "For me? Ach, you need not drobble. I have drunk already too moch in politeness." The book went up again, but I almost felt the cover did not prevent Gyp's grimace from reaching his brain.

We passed through pretty, peaceful country, with occasional low wooden houses and farm buildings,

but there was little sign of life in the fields; no sheep or oxen to be seen. The grass, I was told, is not fit for cattle, and to convert the country into good grazing land, such as it sometimes appears to be, would mean an amount of labour the Japanese have as yet not found to be necessary. We saw tea plantations, not such sturdy specimens as in Ceylon, but the main difference is in the preparation; the tea here is not baked, but dried in the sun. There were hedges of the single white rose we know in England as *Rosa rugosa* or *Bianca*, most effective they look as a hedge. Big sprays of spirea flung themselves wildly and gracefully; the yellow shrub and creeper we commonly call "Japanese Rose" was everywhere, single and double; and one wood was carpeted with a blood-red sheet—dwarf azalea, scarcely a foot high. Not only one, we soon found it was as common a carpet as our own bluebells.

When Gyp had taken in her impressions—she said they should be short and vivid to last—she retired behind a novel, and Cousin Mary and I discussed Murray. At one station Tokimoto called to us, "Five minutes you waiting here," so out we all jumped. Gyp quickly lit her cigarette. "That hideous young man, he prevents my smoking. Do let us shut him out this time."

Boys were strolling up and down the platform, shouting, "Bento! Bento!" and offering little wooden lunch-baskets. Others had big white dough-cakes, and nice, large, crisp-looking biscuits. We bought some, but being unable to appreciate their cardboard tendency, we went from carriage to carriage, and where a baby smiled and waved its fat fingers we placed a big biscuit in them. Everybody was very interested in us.

The young German got in, in spite of Gyp's shutting the door, and he had bought a "Bento"

(luncheon) box. We could not help being interested in its contents, and when Tokimoto came and served us with every luxury, paper napkins, plates, oranges, and little boxes containing many cold meats, her kind spirit moved Cousin Mary to offer to supplement the cold rice, queer dried fish and queerer paste stuff, that the young German was proceeding to tackle.

He was at first proud, but Tokimoto overcame that—"Ladies not eatting so much, I having some, you taking some. Oh yes; it 'ery good, more better san sat."

So we began to talk.

He had been six weeks in Japan, and had seen a great deal, and knew everything. His conversation was instructive. He also spoke English with the familiarity that had bred contempt.

"Conceited little frauds, aren't zey? But zat England's fault is. You've done your best to turn zere monkey heads, and you have succeeded."

Tokimoto had retired, but Gyp did the scowling.

"How do you mean?" I asked, with warmth.

"Conceited little frauds, ze whole pack are, but it's you English zat have zem spoil'd. Turned zere monkey-heads, you have, and now ve pay. Oh! zat knows every von! Giving zem ze power in zere law courts us Chermans and ossers to judge, just like as if zey a civilised people had become. And now England sucks up yet once more. Ze monkey men are her dear allies! She must come far for her allies!"

"Oh, you are jealous," said Gyp, for whom politics had but scant interest, but who scented a fight. "We are quite contented with our allies, thank you."

There was war in the air.

Cousin Mary tried to give the conversation a turn.

"I cannot see why you call them frauds, though. We have found them always perfectly straight and

obliging. And they have charming manners," she added.

"You have found! but zat is comic," laughed the German. "But how moch can you know? Look at zer vork! You can't trust a zing zey make or a word zey say."

"Why not?" We all asked that.

"Why, for example. When you a cabinet or a table should vont, an old von, to be sure, say zree hundred, five hundred years. You tell your man he shall find you such a tisch—table. In zree, four months, ready is it, just so old; wood, lacquer, gilding, all finished; scratches, rubbing; zere your old article is, and zat is ze same wiz every blessed zing zey do."

"Well, that is very clever of them. I suppose it is well made," cried Gyp indignantly, coming out of her book.

"Ach! you do vont to be hombogged. Buy ze prints zen!"

"What about the prints?" Down went Gyp's book.

"Faked, every one of zem. I say with sureness every one of zem."

"I don't believe it! How do you know?"

The young German shrugged his shoulders.

"Not a good von left. In Paris some you see, and ze rich Japs buy all ze rest. But zey want your money, zat's sure; if you're fools enough to let zem have it!"

Thunder was in Gyp's frown, and a chill in her voice.

"Oh, really! Well, we happen to have bought some very good ones, you see."

The young German laughed. "Don't you believe it. Zey have copied ze old woodcuts—easy zat!—zen zey rub paper quite zin, get it vorm-eatten, hang it in smoke, bury it—easy enough—and zere's your old print! Ze little frauds!"

He was touching a very delicate point with his

slashing criticism. Gyp and I had fallen victims to the fascinating ladies, who in lovely, trailing kimonos gazed so superciliously at us from the mellow background of the old print.

In a small retiring shop, to which Toki had introduced us, we had made acquaintance with the wonderful artists of a hundred years ago, and we were beginning to fancy ourselves and our discrimination where Toyokuni, Utamaro, Yezun, Hiroshigi, Hokusai, Kunisada — are they not beautiful names?—were concerned. The curious little old man, all wrinkles and bright eyes, who kept these treasures, would draw one after another from his store, almost grudgingly—for he cared not at all to part with them; but our admiration appealed to him, and he would stroke the frail paper gently and murmur, "Beautial—beautial!"

That in other shops we might have been led astray was possible, and that was the delicate point, for Toki had gaily laughed over one "find" of Gyp's.

"You buying sat? Why you buying him? he not good—you asking Hamagura."

And in answer to Gyp's indignation, he went on—

"Miss Gyp she angry,"—Toki's amusement over anger was very disconcerting—"Miss Gyp looking at paper—'ery thick—not old."

So muttering naughty "donnerwetters," Gyp retired behind her book again, and the young German continued gaily, his moustache curling upwards as he spoke—

"It's the same wiz everyzing. In trade, business, you can't trust zem von inch. No commercial morality have zey, no idea a contract how to keep."

"Oh, we have helped them there, haven't we?" I cried bitterly.

"We are teaching zem zey *must*," he went on,

"if zat is what you would say. If zey wiz ze big nations compete will, zey must learn honesty."

"From Germany?" came from the shaking book.

I had heard of this business-like deficiency before. It was partly explained by the odium in which Old Japan had always held all traders, and on the principle of "Give a dog a bad name and hang him" trade had grown to deserve some of the mud hurled at it. As to contracts, Japan had not learnt that they hold good "for better for worse," if circumstances change they wish to change too. They held to the spirit more than to the letter. I tried to explain this to the young German, but he would none of it.

Cousin Mary suggested that their present work, lacquer, painting, needlework, were still beautiful and good.

"Oh! I like zere needlevork. Of course zey imitate ze old all ze time."

"Well, a child could tell the difference there; the new is on quite other lines, and the old, the really old, is unmistakable." I felt sure of my ground.

"Don't you believe it," was all he could say. "Zey lie about everyzing."

The young man was wrong here, therefore he might be wrong elsewhere. Heaven knows how he had been depressing us; he had taken the sunshine out of the air. I could see Gyp was miserable. "If I believed a word he said, I would burn all my prints," she whispered to me, and then relapsed into a thundercloud.

Cousin Mary again tried to bring relief. "I see you are studying the language. Do you find it very difficult?"

"Not as much as I care to know. I won't be bozzerd with all zose honorifics and tom-fooleries!"

"Oh, you are not learning to speak it politely," I said. "Might I see your book?"

He gave it me, and continued to explain to Cousin Mary that he found it best to call a spade a spade in every country. Straightforward dealing and speaking was his idea. Why talk of "honourable this," or "graciously condescend," when the imperative mood and a plain word would serve the purpose?

I opened his text-book. I read, under a heading of "Some Rude Remarks": "Brainless idiot," and the Japanese equivalent. "You had better look out, insolent fellow." "You're lying again, you rascal!" "Get out of my way, I've done with you, fool!"

I looked across at the young man, and back to the book. I could hardly believe my eyes. A guide to the Japanese language!—a language in which the term for a rude person is "other than expected fellow," and where "other than expected conduct" resulted, in the good old days, in the swing of the Samurai's sword, to be now reduced to the insults of Billingsgate or its German equivalent! It was too original! I could imagine him turning over the leaves of his little book! "Baka—Baka—bo!" and the astonished little Jap would bow double.

"Honourably condescend honourable meaning clear making."

"Bring tea—do you hear!"

"Honourable tea instantly coming is."

"Don't talk. I hate being made a fool of. Bring your bill!"

I could fill in the other side—the politeness, the bows, the astonishment, and then the laughter.

I was laughing too.

"Well, this is the funniest conversation book I have ever encountered. Do you mean, do you really and truly *mean*, that you address them in this manner?"

Gyp brightened. "Let me see."

"I find it most useful," said the young German coldly. "I vant not a rascally guide cheating me at every turn, and you need to let zem see you ze superior are."

"Oh—oh!" Gyp began. "'Idiotic donkey'! That's useful. 'Stuff and nonsense.' 'Why are Japanese hotels always dirty?'—they aren't, but that's a minor point. 'Mind you don't blab.' Imagine wanting to say that in Japanese! Oh, what a treasure of a little book! Learning made easy! If only Ollendorf had given us such pithy phrases instead of 'Where is my gardener's aunt's cousin's wife's pen?' how enjoyable we should have found your deadly language."

Good-humour was quite restored to Gyp's face, but the young German frowned.

"I have knocked about ze vorld—I don't wear kid gloves for every day. You ladies and your guide, you aren't seeing Japan. Just picture-book scenes!"

"Yes," asked Gyp eagerly; "and what do you see?"

"Realities!" said the German, and up twirled his moustache.

"'Dirt! rascally idiots! cheats and liars!' Now you don't think, do you, there can be anything the matter with your glasses?"

"I don't wear zem. I see straight."

"You're awfully interesting, you know," summed up Gyp.

Cousin Mary breathed again at Gyp's last remark. Cousin Mary finds it difficult to take a purely spectacular interest in such conversations.

"You speak English so very well," she said graciously.

He did not take the compliment in the same spirit.

"Oh, English! Zat is no trobble. I learn in ze

school, I go not to England. All Chermans can English speak."

"Yes, I suppose they must," I said meditatively.

"Must! Why for you say 'must'?"

"Oh, in order to help you to cut us out in our Eastern trade, you know," I explained, with kindness. "Of course English is the common language out here."

Gyp broke in—

"Why, you have to fall back on English swear-words when those beauties in your book fail you. 'Donner-wetter-potz-tausand-blitze' won't help you here. And don't you notice *all* the places you must stop at—for coal or anything—they *all* are English! I wonder how your Kaiser likes that! Learn English! Of course you *must*, you can't travel without it."

I think it was high time we arrived at Nara, the atmosphere in that carriage was simply volcanic.

Tokimoto's mere presence was soothing.

"Oh," sighed Cousin Mary, as he helped her into a rickshaw and placed each of our hand-bags at our feet,—"oh! I am glad that's over. Helen, why will you start arguments?"

And Gyp shouted with laughter—

"I feel so much better. I never can bottle up my feelings. We did give it him at last. Little reptile! I am sure my prints are not faked. I shouldn't wonder if that last one of yours is, though, Helen; I told you not to buy it."

"It is sad to think your gold lacquer powder-box must be modern, but it is very nice at that, dear," was my soothing reply; and fortunately our coolies started off at a run, and when we landed at the hotel door we had other things to think of.

Nara is one of the prettiest little places in Japan. Of course it is famous for its park full of tame deer, and its old temples, and its big, big Buddha; but the

little houses nestling on the hillside, and the fragrant, fresh green of the trees, with trails of wild wistaria hanging from them, all made a picture to remember. We spent some time in the park with the deer and the flame-coloured azaleas. The deer are tame, and the azaleas wild; and we fed the one and picked the other as we walked through long avenues of double and treble rows of stately lanterns to visit the temples and the big Buddha.

But fascinating as Nara is, our pilgrimage was to Ise. So next morning on we went, and an uneventful day's travelling brought us to Yamada, where is the great Shintō shrine of Ise.

At the hotel we were received with not only bows but obeisances, little men and little maids all touched the spotless matting with their little foreheads, and then with cheerful "Ohs" and "Ees" they proceeded to wrap our feet in monster blue bags. They have a very generous idea of a foreigner's foot. Then we were ushered up the flight of steps and shown into our rooms. At least, the rooms were formed round us where we stood.

Sliding screens were drawn by bustling little maidens, while the landlady waved her hands, and bowed, and spoke soft Japanese words, with here and there an English one. "'Ery good! Oh yes—good—good."

Tokimoto appeared, and they bowed dozens of times to each other, and there was much gentle and polite explanation. Toki turned to Cousin Mary. "I writing to keep rooms European fashion—he keeping. Oser guide, oser party coming, sey taking. Now no more rooms European fashion! You having Japanese fashion, he 'ery comforble, you liking?"

"Well, I don't know," hesitated Cousin Mary, and she looked at the matting and the screens which had turned the long corridor into three little compartments. "I suppose they can give us——"

Two little maidens, rolling a large kind of mattress, a sort of solid *duvet*, interrupted her. Away they toddled and, laughing, brought another and another, till each little division had three, and then—oh, we were to be very European, after all!—sheets and a pillow, and a thinner futon—that is their name—for the top.

Gyp spread herself on one. "It's ripping, Mother. Don't worry that dear little woman about beds."

The little landlady went up and knelt by Gyp, and took her hand. She touched her cheek and said, "Good, good," which made Gyp blush; then, "Moser," pointing at Cousin Mary, "Okusan," and, patting Gyp, "Bébé San."

"No, no," said Gyp; "that's my Mother," and she nodded at me.

"Iiye, iiye," laughed the little lady; and a dumb show indicated who belonged to who, and that my Bébé San was far away.

"You are bound to have a few, you see; they don't grasp 'old maids' here," remarked Gyp.

"Old maids! Really, Gyp!" Cousin Mary looked at me apologetically.

"She doesn't mind. Why, they ask *me* how many babies I have, and I always say 'three,' because that is a lucky number."

Then she turned to the admiring little landlady. "Run away, my dear, and make us some tea, English tea—'cha'—no 'O Cha.'" Toki had given us a lesson on that word: "Lady not saying 'cha!'" and he pronounced it harshly, "but"—with softest intonation—"O Cha." Certainly we must give the tea its honourable "O."

That first night's rest on the Japanese futons left much to be desired from a sleeper's point of view. I had the outer division of the three formed by the sliding screens, and just as my eyes were closing, I was recalled from that peaceful state by

a light shining over the top of the screen, which did not reach the ceiling by about two feet; and a gentle, insistent little rubbing, and a little sighing, made me light my candle and creep to the screen, which I slid apart. Behold a fat and sleepy-looking little maiden squatting by the side of a single futon, with a paper lamp by her side, and collected round her was all the foreign footwear of the hotel's guests! She was giving a futile brush first to one shoe, then to another; and she looked up at me, smiled sleepily, and went on brushing.

"You naughty little girl, put out the light and go to sleep."

My gestures should have explained my meaning, but she continued placidly to scrub. So I went up to her, took the brush and boots away, rolled her, kimono and all, on to her sleeping-place, and signed to her to put out the lamp. This active order was understood and obeyed, and I withdrew, well pleased, behind my accommodating wall.

It was a hot night, and we had arranged that the outer wooden shutters should be left partly open for the sake of air; also I had left the inner paper shobi apart for the same reason. The balcony, between the two, runs round the house, but I preferred even the chance of a sleepwalker or burglar to breathlessness. This was, however, not the custom, and about twelve o'clock a watchman passed all round and drew together any shobi he found open.

I heard his heavy tread, and saw his swinging lantern, so concluded he was no burglar, and when he paused to box me in I shouted, "Leave that alone!" but he did his duty and continued his round. When he had withdrawn I opened my shutter and gazed out into the dark night, the stars were hidden and the air was heavy. I stretched myself on my futons and hoped for peace. Presently from the garden and road below came again heavy

footfalls, and the whirr of the night watchman's rattle. I was very tired, so it does not matter what I said; and even Cousin Mary, in the next division, woke up to moan, "Oh, what a noise everyone is making!" and straightway slept again. Nothing wakens Gyp. As the rattle retreated I flattered myself I too should sleep; but no, this was our own particular watchman, he soon made it clear that he and his rattle were permanent parts of the sleeping hours. He was going to guard us properly from everything—fire, burglars, and ghosts! Oh yes! that warning rattle was quite as much to ward off the hauntings of the other world as any evil-minded person in this. I lay awake for hours pondering on the ghostly side of Japan. Lafcadio Hearn lifts the curtain here as elsewhere to the suggestions and subtleties of this strange land, the heart and soul of which he seemed to understand. But at two o'clock, the ghostly hour of the Ox! sleep is the most precious thing this weary world can offer, and I felt I would make a bid for it at any price. So waiting for the recurrent thud, thudding, and whirr of the rattle, I stationed myself on the balcony at the opening of the wooden shutters, with the faithful Murray in one hand and a candle in the other. I had not invested in a conversation-book like the young German, but I had my sentence ready, for Murray thoughtfully gives a few necessary samples as an introduction to his guide-book, and I had selected one or two. "That is enough" is translated as "Already good," and did not seem adequate to the occasion. "Oh! what a bother!"—"Troubled thing is, isn't it?" I also rejected, but "Don't do that"—"Honourably abstaining deign" I felt sure must touch the heart of even that noisy wooden rattle, and I hurled the words forth into the dark, "O yoshi nasai." My answer was a dead halt on

the part of steps and lantern, and a perfect tornado of creaking whirrings from that abominable rattle. I repeated my request, and I added "noisy" and "troublesome," and "that as for, useless is." The effect was the same, excepting that both Cousin Mary and Gyp's shobi were withdrawn, two indignant heads were thrust out, and I was abused.

"It's the watchman," I said.

"Go to bed."

"Go to sleep."

"I can't. 'Little even, isn't;'" I still held my Murray.

"Then don't wake other people up—wretch!"

And one shobi closed violently. The other slid to, and a rebukeful voice softly murmured, "I think you can if you *try*, dear!"

What the watchman thought I then began to conjecture. In the dark before him, high above the ground, had appeared a tall white form—I am quite tall in Japan, and a night-dress has an elongating effect. This form was dimly lit in manner unknown, "carried its own light" in séance parlance, and it spoke in strange commanding tones perfectly strange words. The obvious thing to do was to scare it, that assuredly was his duty. So far from "honourably abstaining deign," the place of the spectre woman was rigorously guarded, and rattled at, till the Ox's hour, two till four, had passed, and then the watchman went home, and I think I went to sleep.

I tried my beautifully pronounced sentence afterwards on Tokimoto, and he had a very merry moment, in fact it was a recurrent joy to him.

"Miss Helen 'ery funny ghost-lady, is not?"

After the usual hot soaking in the "honourable bath" I felt refreshed, and prepared, possibly in a somewhat chastened spirit, for the great event of the day.

It was a day of steady, straight, incessant rain, a cooling, beneficent, comforting flow. Oh, the sweetness of the sound, of the smell, of the taste! The patient earth answering this love-message of the clouds with an increase of gratitude. Why should we abuse a wet day? as though wetness were the only attribute of that cleansing and refreshing downpour. If we were not prejudiced by visions of mud and draggled skirts I believe a lovely walk on a rainy day would be one of the joys of earth! Had the air of Japan taught me this obvious lesson? that like every other bit of wisdom has to rise up as a new thought within oneself before we truly know it. Was it the secret of the contented, smiling faces that greeted us now, and always, from under the yellow umbrellas? Let us change our point of view, and bless the rainy days, and perhaps then, in token of gratitude, we too shall raise beautiful umbrellas to the greeting clouds, and also smile serenely.

This rainy day at Yamada stands out in my memory's vision as one of soft, soothing greyness, with a gentle, incessant, dripping music; and the temple of Ise is for ever veiled in a clear, falling mist, and appropriately shrouded by the impenetrable seriousness of the forest of sad, stately cryptomeria trees. Grandest, tallest, gravest of trees, fit guardians of sacred mysteries, planted when gods and men met and mingled, and haunted still by the footfalls of endless pilgrims, past and present, in whose minds that far-away time still lives in the person of their Mikado, the descendant of the Heaven-born.

We were on sacred ground; the coolies and the rickshaws were left at the severe gateway. Tokimoto almost stealthily opened the big yellow umbrellas, —he had discarded our own as totally inadequate to the occasion and borrowed from the obliging

landlady,—and each one of us, placed beneath the roomy shelter, paced reverently up the avenue of mighty monarchs that hide the temple, to whose care the radiant Sun-Goddess has committed her three historic treasures—her jewel, her sword and her mirror, emblem of her spirit.

And indeed this was a spiritual vision that we had travelled far to see, for the temple itself no man may view, save the "descendant of the gods" and the high priest. And so little is the temple of any account—the mere material building, built from the guardian trees themselves—that every twenty years its outward tabernacle is dissolved, and with solemn ceremony the hidden treasures are removed to another building, made afresh with the curious simplicity that was ordained at the beginning of all things. Low and massive is the roof of shingle, with mighty rafters laid across, and the fragrant, firm wood in all its strength and unpainted reality stands as steadfast walls.

A high fence shuts out all inquisitive eyes, and at the entrance to the enclosure a sheltering porch holds a Shintō altar, plain wood with gold and white paper offerings (Gohei), and before this the devout kneel and pray and clap their hands. The Great One will hear them. Toki was clapping his hands, and Gyp hers. The curtain behind the altar shuts out further vision. It is told—Tokimoto related it with awe—that on one occasion a visitor to the shrine, a Japanese of noble family, raised his stick and moved the curtain to see into the forbidden beyond, before the stern watchman could prevent the sacrilegious act. The fame of the infamous deed was noised abroad, and one man, enthusiast, fanatic, felt it borne in on him to avenge the insults to the deity, lest his country suffer. He travelled to Yamada, learnt the absolute facts of the case, and returning to Tokyo, sought out the

transgressor, and presented him in his own house with a dagger in his heart. It meant instantaneous death to himself, but he left his motive quite clear in a letter. That happened a dozen years ago, but it might happen to-day, and I think Toki wished Gyp to realise it.

"But the sacred dance! How are we to see that if we mayn't even see the outside of the blessed place?" wailed the quite convinced Gyp. Those mighty trees had dwarfed even Gyp.

"Oh, we going now other temple just near, made just like sis one; priests sere and having dances."

Have you not often felt, in the solemnity inspired by Gothic arches, while the roll of the priest's benediction still vibrates in the air, how incongruous is the brass plate or velvet bag, seeking the coin, and bringing one down with a rush from things sublime to the lowest depths of materialism? "Money! not now!" your spirit remonstrates, and perhaps in no niggardly mood either. On such occasions I should like a Tokimoto to do my good deed for me, and not confront me with it till later. Even as at the deputy Ise temple we paid for our religious dance, but at the time we waved our hands and Tokimoto arranged matters, with bows innumerable, with one of the lesser priests.

Outside, under the shade of cryptomerias and a kindly open roof, waited many pilgrims; they would have their turn afterwards, for which they were to pay a liberal sum. Inside, shoes off, a matted floor, plain wood, cleanliness and simplicity, the altar, the paper, the mirror—and silence. Then half a dozen priests in very full, very stiff, silk robes entered, and squatted by the wall inside the railing that divided the oblong building in two, —we three and Toki were squatting the other side,— and they had "instruments of musick" that dated from the time the goddess gave her treasures and

the Empire to her grandson, and the music they played on them they learned from the beat of the rain and the cry of the wind in the branches of the cryptomerias. It was archaic, but had Richard Wagner wandered there in dreams he would have recognised his "motiv" idea in three wild ascending notes, recurring again and again. Surely an aspiration after the unattainable.

As they beat the archaic drum, and whistled on the instrument of wind, three pairs of little girls moved in to the centre; strange, small, lithesome little maidens, with dark, wondering eyes in solemnly still and whitened faces, overshadowed and encircled by strange and glittering head ornaments. Their short white kimonos ended at their knees, and their long, full, red silk trousers trailed three or four feet on the ground. They moved through them. They carried gifts to the altar—fish, rice and saké—and placed them there, with deepest obeisance, on small platters of red earthenware, the shape of an open cup that was used in the beginning of all things. Then they commenced their dance, slow bowing, slow waving of long white sleeves, slow trailing backwards and forwards of long red garments, like reeds shaken by the wind, like corn bending in a blast, like the topmost boughs of the tall cryptomerias in a winter storm, but like no dance that a Western mind ever imagined. Surely even so did Miriam "dance before the Lord."

"Whose virgins are these,—the virgins who stand like flowers before the Deity?"

"They are the virgins of the august Deity."

"The august music, the dancing of the virgins,—the Deity will be pleased to hear, the Deity will be pleased to see.

"Before the great bright God the virgins dance,—the virgins all like flowers newly opened . . ." [1]

[1] As quoted by Lafcadio Hearn.

When it ended, they sank, like six small red-and-white flowers, with glittering golden crowns, on the matting, three either side; and then a stately priest, in green silk robes that seemed woven from the greenest leaves of the forest,—woven with hands, no machine could have touched that thick, irregular surface,—passed up to the altar, and in stately, sonorous tongue presented his petition.

"He telling 'God' your name," whispered Toki, very impressed. "He asking you have plenty, and happy, and all good."

I hoped my name was there, I hoped Toki's was. Gyp's eyes were sparkling, but Cousin Mary looked distressed.

Then the beautiful priest brought us from the altar the red earthenware cup of saké, and we all sipped it. Truly it was a loving-cup—an outward sign of the Universal Father's good gifts to His children all the world over.

And we went out into the rain, with its song of silence, and to the deep calm of the grand cryptomerias, and I felt a great peace. Surely my name, too, was in the beautifully robed priest's prayer.

And Cousin Mary, who would not even unwittingly seem to desert her own banner, whispered—

"Helen, was it 'bowing in the House of Rimmon,' do you think?"

And Gyp, with still sparkling eyes, kept repeating, "Wasn't it beautiful! wasn't it beautiful! It made one feel good. Oh, Toki, I like your church. If I could I would desert my beneficent Buddha, but I will certainly adopt the 'Combination Way.'"

And Tokimoto looked at me—radiant.

"You liking? It just God—that Shintō."

Shintōism—the Way of the Gods.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT IEYASU

YOKOHAMA is a place you must go to either when you arrive or when you depart. We were doing neither, but merely ending our journey along the "Tocaido" road, the old roadway that used to unite Kyoto, the Mikado's capital, and Yedo—or Tokyo—the Shogun capital, in the days of Old Japan, and where the astonished eyes of this generation saw the first railway run, which now they take as much as a matter of course as we do.

It was on this railway journey that we had our first sight of Fuji-San in real life. The presence of this sacred mountain may be truly said to dominate the whole of Japan. Everyone, the whole world over, who has ever bought the smallest trifle that comes, or pretends to come, from Japan, knows the outline, the snow-capped crown, of this queen of mountains. And in the land itself, in their oldest and best art, as in the most modern, Fuji-San holds a conspicuous place. Every mountain that bears the slightest resemblance—and the volcanic crown is not unusual, and of necessity somewhat alike—is honoured and of note, and for Fuji herself every Japanese feels a love and reverence not unlike that he gives to the Mikado. Familiar as we were with the mountain, it was truly with a shock of surprise and delight that we saw suddenly before us, rising straight and

solitary from the level of the sea to the dazzling blue of the sky, that wonderful snow-crowned pyramid, its 15,000 feet of majesty revealed without obscurity or interruption. High as the Matterhorn, but while that rugged pile suggests entirely the masculine gender, so does Fuji speak of feminine grace—and there, you have seen enough. Fuji summons her cloud attendants, and the unrevealed is more enticing than the glimpse of the whole upright form.

Having arrived at Yokohama, and found ourselves at a big and fashionable hotel on the Bund, we decided to leave at once, and feel that we really were still in Japan.

It was a most fascinating individual who detained us for some days.

A gentle knock had sounded at my door.

"Come in!" and in he came.

I have an absurd weakness for Chinamen. From their neat round caps with a button at the top, to their beautiful shoes of velvet and satin appliqué, black, mauve, pale blue, always the right combination, they are fascinating. The intermediate space, in this instance, was clad in a long, dark mauve, figured silk coat, fastened at the side, and lined with palest silk; the trousers, Chinese design, were black satin, and their bagginess below the knee was gradually drawn in and swathed round the ankle into the shoe. His queue was long and thin, and his face was calm, smooth, and kind.

"Missee wanting dless? My making velly good flock, plenty cloth, plenty silk, velly good, velly cheap plice. Sat my card." The words simply slithered out, and with a serene smile he handed me a card and a pattern book.

"P'laps missee wanting blouse jus-a-now, velly hot, missee liking silk blouse?"

"We are not staying here," I began, feeling weakly

that yielding was inevitable—"there would be no time, we leave to-morrow."

"To-molloh! Missee going Tokyo? Nikko? Velly well, my making dless, my making blouse, missee coming back and all-leady. My taking mlesure."

I was examining the silks. Of course I wanted things; why, it was months since I had even thought of clothes, and this smooth-tongued Chinese tailor would lure even the most experienced fly.

Gyp's voice was heard.

"Helen, Helen! which is your room? I want you," and in she burst. "I have tried three doors, and one man looked so astonished—— Oh! you've got one too, and what a lovely one! He's much better than mine, let me look at his patterns. Helen, are you ordering things? I have absolutely no clothes left."

"But, Gyp, there is no time now."

"My dear, then we must make it. It is really necessary to think of one's appearance a little. Oh, this is a pretty silk!"

She sat down on the table and took up the card.

"Ah Chong—they are all 'Ahs.' I have one waiting in my room, but I like yours best. So you can take mine, can't you?"

"You *are* kind. I prefer my own."

"All right, I don't mind. Ah Chong, can you make me a very nice dress very quickly, and two or three blouses?"

He smiled beneficently.

"All-light, can do. What missee liking?"

Gyp was deep in cloths—grey, blue, or brown; and silks, pretty light Japanese silks.

"Helen, you might take an interest. Shall I have blue cloth or serge?"

Enter Cousin Mary. "Oh, you have one too!

But, Gyp, there is someone waiting in your room, do you know? He said you were coming back."

"Oh, do go and send him away then. No, I don't want him, because I like Helen's man best. He has far nicer stuffs. Go, there's a dear."

"He was not half so well dressed himself," went on Gyp, as Cousin Mary obeyed. "Now, Ah Chong, what will you make me a coat and skirt of this material for?"

Once Gyp was launched we gave up going the next day, and finding her order growing larger and larger, I left my fascinating Chinaman and went to interview Cousin Mary's tailor. A swarm of them seemed to have been let loose in the hotel, and coats and skirts were in the air.

When I went back to Gyp the smooth voice was still going on: "Velly cheap plice, thirty-five yen, making embloiderly lound sleeves, lound neck piecee. Missee liking and missee giving florty yen."

Gyp was shaking her head.

"Oh, you heathen Chinee! you began at thirty yen, and where are you trotting up to?"

"My making number one flock, alle same paying fifty, sixty dollars San Francisco. Other missee ordling too?"

"No, don't ask her yet. Let me finish first."

"Gyp, does it not strike you that your conduct is cool?"

"Oh, my dear girl, don't ask things to strike me just when I am so very busy. I have a sort of idea brown will suit me better than blue. Then you can take blue!"

"Oh, thank you."

Ah Chong bowed himself out at last, he was to come for fitting that evening, and send everything finished on to Tokyo in three days' time.

There was nothing Ah Chong could not and would not do. But he did not do it.

It was all very demoralising, clothes always are to a mind that is struggling after higher things. They become so terribly necessary, assume such gigantic proportions in the scale of existence, and thoughts wrapped in crêpe de chine and Japanese silks cannot readily disentangle themselves. Even prints failed for a few days to raise Gyp from sartorial delights.

But one day brought a corrective. A day of lovely warmth and bluest skies, and in a garden of greenest hues—cherry and plum, maple and bamboo —we sat and felt our unworthy insignificance before the mighty statue of the Kamakura Daibutzu, or big Buddha.

> "A statue solid set
> And moulded in colossal calm."

In these words of the poet, who so well understood the beauty of the Eastern thought, lies all of the wondrous charm and power that is expressed in this figure.

Size, as merely something big, has always seemed to me to militate against impressiveness, and I was not prepared to be overwhelmed because the devout, many hundred years ago, determined to outdo the Nara temple and erect a bigger Buddha. The eyes of gold are four feet, the face over eight feet long, the silver bump of wisdom nine inches high; all these things are against him. But the mould into which the collection from so many eager givers was cast, had Sir Edwin Arnold's thought at the back of it, and the "colossal calm" and tranquil majesty stands there for all to understand who have the understanding eye.

In lonely state he reigns in his garden. Twice have they sought to entomb him in a temple, but the sea at one time, and earthquake at another, have swept away the roof, for the blue vault of

The Buddha of Kamakura.

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heaven was the only fitting shelter, and that the "Wise One" knew. His followers now know it too, and leave him so.

> "And whoso will, from pride released,
> Contemning neither creed nor priest,
> May feel the soul of all the East
> About him at Kamakura."

I deceived Toki on this occasion.

Toki was kind to my camera, but certain subjects and places are supposed to be forbidden by the Japanese law to amateur photographers, and Toki, the law-abiding to a wonderful and sometimes inconvenient degree, occasionally made me leave my camera behind. We had some polite words over this excursion.

"Miss Helen not taking camera Kamakura. Japanese peoples not liking." (This stood for the Powers that be.)

"I want to take this big Buddha in his garden very much, Toki. I won't be found out."

"No—not taking. At Kamakura Army and Navy keeps. Can buy Kamakura Buddha photograph."

"I won't trouble the Army and Navy" (the islands in the bay that surround Kamakura are strongly fortified). "I only want Buddha. Don't you worry, Toki, I won't be caught. Other people have done it all right."

"Take away camera, making pay many yens. Much more better not taking."

And then he talked over Cousin Mary, and it appeared the photographer who developed the negatives would know and might report the misdeed, and Toki, as guide, might find himself in trouble.

At this Gyp lectured me severely for nasty selfishness. But I hid my camera under a cloak. I let Tokimoto walk on with Gyp, and I took my

photograph by stealth, and then with an open countenance joined the others and bought photographs with them.

Toki was very pleased with me.

"Much more better sat is. Japanese peoples not liking."

No; I knew now, the photographer had the monopoly.

"I should not have let them find me out, Toki."

"Might," was Toki's answer.

I kept that negative dark as long as we were in Japan. Then Gyp was very anxious to have a photograph that we had taken ourselves! At the time she held it over me, "I will tell Toki you have deceived him," which was a very real threat. Tokimoto ruled us, by kindness it is true, but, though we none of us confessed it, we *were* ruled.

And so the gentle Buddha brought us back to our better selves, and, like "Kim's" Llama, we were ready to sally forth with but a blanket and a begging bowl. At least, that is what Cousin Mary and I said; Gyp still clung to her skirt and coat with "embloidered neck piecee!"

"Rise above it, Gyp," I entreated. "Let us leave this aggressively Europeanised 'Bund,' these hat shops and other snares of civilisation. You don't really want those clothes, you are clothed anyway. We will collect the garments when we return."

"No, no; I must just have my 'embloidered dless.' I will leave the other things, since Buddha thinks I had better. It is your own fault, Helen; you discovered that smooth-faced villain, Ah Chong. I believe the little Ah Tong would have kept his word better. I wish I had tried him."

"I believe in Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did," I answered with severity.

Toki was despatched to bring Ah Chong by his pigtail with the dress, he returned disconcerted.

" I not liking Ah Chong. I go sere, finding shop. I 'ery angry, tell him he come, he not sere, no one knowing, sey all singing, make me much more angry, say he will come."

" Oh, but will he, Toki?—I must see him."

" Might," said Toki.

He came with everything half finished, but with the ready lie slipping smoothly and convincingly from his smiling lips.

" Missee dless just leady, embloiderlies making muchee time. My sending Tokyo after to-mollow. Four five ladies going Amellica, must send to ship, missee dless making, chop, chop."

" Look here, Ah Chong, if you don't send them in two days' time I won't take them, so there." Gyp's wrath was struggling with Ah Chong's serenity.

" Missee not angly. My velly good man, allesame coming after to-mollow."

So we went to Tokyo, and we heard no more of Ah Chong, or any of the clothes from any of the tailors, till we returned to Yokohama.

Tokyo is a little more Japanese than Yokohama, but not much. With an Emperor who makes European costume *de rigueur* for the Court, and wishes the country to enter the lists with the European nations, an army and navy that can hold their own, and an Empress who drives about in a carriage and pair, looking gracious in a French toque and veil, you cannot so easily realise Japan. Still we did manage to see a very interesting side, and learn some history also, and that was at the theatre.

Dan Juro is the great actor,—the Sir Henry Irving of Japan, he has been told, and liked the compliment. There is always a Dan Juro in Japan, for he is as the king, " Danjuro est mort, vive Danjuro," and the once celebrated name is handed on, an artistic kinship being the only claim. This

Danjuro had a quiet, intense face, and acted with the same calm self-control that is the outcome of the Japanese ideal; he made long pauses, and moved his hands rarely, but—I am talking now of Ieyasu, the famous Shogun of the sixteenth century, for he and Danjuro are as one in my mind.

The play is modern, but the appeal to Japanese favour is a strong one when the great Ieyasu is the subject of the story. He is one of Japan's most famous heroes, and up to the time of the Revolution it was his descendants, the Tokugawa dynasty, who still held the Shogunate, and they were his laws, "The Legacy of Ieyasu," which were the groundwork of the past government. This "Legacy" has been compared in importance to the will of Peter the Great, and it elaborated a grand feudal system, with a strong democratic tendency.

"The art of governing a country consists in the manifestation of due deference on the part of the suzerain towards his vassals," "The People are the foundation of the Empire," "To assist the People is to give Peace to the Empire," are thoughts to be found in his "Legacy," beside a grand list of public functionaries and the duties and position of each class; and all, both "great and small," are expected to show such fidelity, "even to the suffering their bones to be ground to powder, and their flesh to be chopped up for me," as Shogun.

The Shogunate was established in 1192, when Yoritomo, a great hero, delivered the Mikado from some enemy, and in gratitude he was called "Seitai-Shogun," which being interpreted means "Barbarian-destroying-Generalissimo." With the power of the army to back them, the Shoguns became virtual rulers of the land, always reverencing the Mikado as a sacred person committed to their charge, but not required to interfere in the real government of the country.

Ieyasu, a great general at the end of the sixteenth century, finally seized the highest rank because he was the wisest and the strongest, the former very famous Shogun Hideyoshi having left but a weak-kneed boy to succeed him. Ieyasu's slate is not quite clean, but those were stern and war-like times, and he was quite right in thinking Japan needed him at the head of her affairs. When he "peacefully ascended to the skies" as "Gongen Sama," a minor deityhood granted by the Mikado, he could look down on a peaceful succession of his descendants, and an increase of peace and prosperity to Japan under his laws, until in 1868 the Mikado again, after nearly six centuries, centred the political and religious and social Empire in himself.

The play commenced at 11 o'clock in the morning, and those who wished to have their "money's worth" could continue to be entertained until 9 at night. They had three plays, however, during this time; Dan Juro's ended about 4.30. We did not feel equal to even all that, but had we been to the manner born we should have taken our "Bento" box, supplemented occasionally by obliging little boys with various cakes and fruits, and by the comforting and honourable little pipe and little teapot, we should have squatted in happy content for the entire time. In little boxes, formed by a small partition about a foot high, with square cushions on the matting if luxurious, a happy family, or party, grouped themselves, and, with smiling equanimity, talked, ate, smoked, and enjoyed themselves for the day. One could go away and come again—the place was reserved—but it certainly would be a pity to miss any of the show.

Dan Juro's play had very distinct points of interest, even beside the excellent acting, and, with the help of a queerly-worded English "Epitome," the stranger was enabled to take an intelligent interest.

It took us back to that very far-away sixteenth century, and to the manners and customs which in the last thirty-five years have more or less died out.

Perhaps the story of the play may not be uninteresting.

A noble, banished from the capital, Yedo, during some past trouble, is living in retirement in his village, and his wife spins and instructs her two sons in literature and arms. To her comes the offer, or rather command, to proceed to Yedo, and become tutoress to the young grandson of the great Ieyasu, the future Shogun, whose father is the present Shogun, Ieyasu having retired in his favour; but his was a personalty that could not retire. The laws in Japan tend doubtless to keep women in their "proper place,"—we all know what that means,—but even in Oriental countries we continually witness the strange sight of women rising out of that restricted sphere from the force of circumstances,—circumstances, too, of the most masculine gender,—and they do the work they can do, spite of laws to the contrary. So the lady, not the lord, goes to teach the young Takechiyo, a celebrated Shogun of the future. The mother of this boy, a lady of apparently much power and will, prefers her younger son, and wishes to secure the succession of the Shogunate to him. This tendency is encouraged by some spies in her household, for by inducing a split in the Tokugawa family they hope to weaken that party, and so reinstate the son of the great Shogun Hideyoshi, whom Ieyasu has ousted. This party is also plotting in their stronghold at Osaka.

Of course the excellent and vigilant tutoress Kasuga discovers the plot, and though there is an attempt to murder her, she and her maid quickly disarm the ruffian—had she not taught her sons the use of arms?—and she goes to a temple to meet

the great Ieyasu and show him of the danger to his family.

It is particularly in this scene that one can realise the ceremony and etiquette of Old Japan.

The room is a grand one, with fine painted screens, a raised daïs on which are some few square cushions, and there in state sits Ieyasu, his daughter-in-law also squats at a respectful distance, but the rest of the world is doubled up with its forehead touching the floor. If a messenger is despatched and has to rise, he passes the Presence with his head well down, no inferior head may ever rise above a superior one. If addressed, the doubled-up lords raise their foreheads, answer respectfully, and down they go again. Some of these lords—daimios—are dressed in the long trailing trousers of the past, resembling those worn by the little priestesses at Ise; others have the ordinary kimono and overcoat; all carry two swords, and wear their hair in the old style, a tail brought forward in a loop over a shaven part of the head.

The great Ieyasu sends for the grandsons, favours the elder and snubs the younger pointedly, giving one cakes and a place of honour, and the other stands and has a cake thrown to him. "What the degradation to be given cakes in such a manner!" cries the disappointed mamma; but Ieyasu answers, "The second son is not very much different from an employed attendant."

He then regales the company with a long dissertation, evidently from some well-known part of his writings, beginning, "The life of man is like a long journey, carrying a head load." All the heads continue bowed. It must be a relief when the shining Presence of the Great One is withdrawn, and they can readjust themselves.

Honourable tea is brought in by little doubled-up maidens in grand kimonos, and the little lacquer

tables and lacquer cups and pots cause us an acute attack of the buying mania.

The family feud having been thus simply quelled, the faithful Kasuga's husband is brought in. A position has been offered him, and her two boys are engaged as pages. But the noble husband has responded with a letter of divorce for his wife, and she promptly requests to be allowed to retire. These rather arbitrary measures astonish nobody. Of course all understand that Inabi Sado-no-Kami could not accept a post won for him by the services of a wife; and of course Kasuga, being a good wife, wishes to sink her own individuality and retire to her husband's side.

"How noble you are," says Ieyasu; "but since you have divorced Kasuga you are no more her husband. From this moment I engage you, Sado, not Kasuga's husband. You shall have the post and twenty thousand koku for your service." And then "he speaks again," as our Epitome puts it.

"It has been said that husband and wife are united, not only in this world, but in the next world. Sado has promoted himself by his own ability. It's over. The two souls, once united, however, should not be disunited. Upon hearing these gracious words, Sado and Kasuga are reunited amid showers of blessings."

Every woman's character is taken by a man or boy, there are no women actors in Japan, and the parts are so well filled one does not miss them. The dress and the wig are an easy disguise, and the bowing willowy figures, the airs and graces, the looking up and down of a geisha girl, were even more real than the real thing. The voice was the difficulty, but there was evidently one stereotyped pitch, with an inflection at the end, which quite answered the purpose; and to our unaccustomed ears it sounded as though each word ended on

" arimasu " or " nasai," with an upward turn and a coy look.

The " honourable tea " was being offered all over the theatre, with other dainties, but we left our box,—a box walled in with a foot-high railing and chairs, for they had accommodated our foreign make so far,—and went back to the hotel for just ordinary, commonplace tea. Some of us declared we had had enough theatre, but Tokimoto thought this shocking waste of good tickets.

Toki's humanity was one of his great charms. He frankly loved the theatre, and of course accompanied us, and the " Chivalrous Lady " was not a thing to be lightly missed.

" Miss Gyp he liking, Miss Helen much wishing to see lady like print. If madame 'ery tired, my taking."

" Not at all." We all felt convinced we were dying to see the " Chivalrous One," however much incomprehensible Japanese she might talk. And we were rewarded.

Osen is a " beautiful woman, but withal she is brave and daring," thus ran the synopsis. She had once a husband " who died an unnatural death owing to some complication arising out of a love-affair with a certain woman." In Japan the lady's " past " must be on her husband's side.

She came to the conclusion that " love was fatal," and remained a widow. " She was widely known as a rare woman who would always take the side of the weak and oppressed."

It is at the gate of the temple of Kwannon, at Arakusa, a very well-known part of Tokyo, that we first meet Osen. An old friend of hers also meets her, and asks her kindly supervision over his son, who has just come up to Yedo. The son promptly gets into trouble with some most ruffianly looking " ronins " (free-lances) over the coy-looking

geisha girl who accompanies him. There is a grand skirmish, and the ruffianly ronins are put to flight by the protecting Osen's mighty sword.

They and their fencing master invade the house of Osen, and demand that the young man be given up, and another free fight ensues, in which the " Chivalrous " does wonders, and from the way her sword swings in all directions it is a real mystery that some of those ronins' heads do not roll on the ground; the curtain goes down on this exhilarating scene, amid great applause.

Oh yes, Japan is better than its laws; and the Osens, the Boadiceas, the Hypatias, of all ages, have always had an admiring audience whenever and wherever they have been found. Has not Japan herself been ruled by thirteen empresses? And the reign of the Empress Jingo, who conquered Korea, is among the palmiest of Japan backgrounds.

We were standing in the hall of the big and quite Europeanised hotel when Gyp called me to her.

" Helen, look at this. Now, we must see them. You must manage it, because Mother is *so* absurd, and is getting back to Mrs. Grundy's point of view. That is the worst of these Europeanised places. She wants to feel proper. She will not let me go to the Yoshiwara with those American ladies, and if I oblige her there she must oblige me here. Are you going to be absurd too? Because, if so, I shall go with Toki."

I looked at the advertisement. It was of Japanese wrestlers.

" Not at all. I want to see them very much, but I think we need not call your Mother's attention to this picture. I daresay it is—well, exaggerated."

The Japanese wrestlers are world famous, of course, but I think this kind of wrestler is quite peculiar to Japan. They themselves are freaks

in that land of small people. We had once or twice passed a huge, overgrown, over-fed kind of prize-pig specimen, answering rather to the nigger description, "three foot one way, six foot t'other way, and he weighs 300 lb," and Tokimoto, with pride and awe in his voice, had informed us, "He Japanese wrestler, he 'ery strong man. You seeing Japanese wrestlers."

Apparently this strange divergence from the usual type belongs to no special family or tribe, like the Ainos who inhabit the northernmost island of Yezo, and who are the aborigines, big, gentle-looking beings, with a good deal of beard, but no special resemblance to the "missing link."

The wrestler, however, just comes, according to Tokimoto, and when he is there everyone recognises him as a wrestler, so he has no doubt about his calling in life.

They wear ordinary kimonos when they pass you in the street, but a few green tassels and a great deal of very fat flesh was all the advertisement allowed them.

Cousin Mary was told that it was a duty to go and see them, and this was the last week of their performance. Tokimoto received the order with a smiling face, so Gyp safely conducted her party.

In a very big kind of tent, packed densely with the grey garments of the Japanese man, on a small, raised platform under a gilded pagoda, in the centre, stood two wrestlers.

The advertisement had been most faithful.

Cousin Mary gave a gasp.

"Now don't!" said Gyp sternly.

We had emerged from under flapping screens and up a shakey ladder to our benches at the side, where other Europeans found themselves, to Cousin Mary's relief, and as we seated ourselves Tokimoto, quite officiously I thought, whispered—

"Japanese ladies *not* coming; Japanese gentlemen, oh yes—and geisha girl, Japanese gentlemen paying; but ladies, oh no."

"I should hope not," said Cousin Mary severely, and she gave me a look full of meaning, which I answered with one of innocent astonishment.

Gyp was quite happy.

"I like these queer out-of-the-way things," she said. "Oh, Mother, don't wear that expression! It's perfectly proper, but who cares if it isn't? There, look! over there is that fat, little, German petty Royal Highness who is travelling round Surely she will make you feel all right. And really, at that wrestling show at the Lakes it was pretty much the same thing. The prize-pig man there only had on pink tights, and I don't think the difference between pink tights and no pink tights is perceptible.

"My dear, what are you talking about?" said Cousin Mary. "I am all right. Don't you like it?"

"Then look happy, and don't look at Helen with 'that child ought not to be here' kind of a look—I know it."

"What nonsense! Now, was I, Helen?"

And I said, "Of course not," as in duty bound.

"Well then, which of those fat men will you back? Helen, will you rise to a yen?"

"No, Gyp, sixpence is enough. Betting is not allowed, is it, Toki?"

"No, no," said Toki in his most law-abiding tone; "Japanese laws not liking betting."

"Do you mean," asked Gyp incredulously, "that all these men down there"—an eager throng surrounded the little raised platform—"are not betting? Why, who can prevent them if they choose to?"

"Oh yes—policemen in clothes, not knowing

sey are policemen—all about. Sey hearing and taking up. Sen punished."

"Oh well, I bet they do it at home," argued Gyp.

"At home, might," Toki admitted reluctantly.

"Now, Helen, which man do you back?"

"The biggest," I answered firmly.

And when one was thrown a minute after we both claimed the victor as ours. Cousin Mary was appealed to, but she really could not tell the difference, she assured us.

It seemed a very safe plan to back the biggest, for it was almost inevitable that weight should tell. I do not pretend to understand the art of Japanese wrestling, mine is only the point of view of the mere uninitiated outsider, but what happened looked very much like this.

Two mountainous men, clothed lightly in a band of green tassels, mounted the small stage. They looked well oiled, and rubbed their massive shoulders as though cold. A small Jap, very small by contrast, acted as Umpire, with a waving fan in his hand to give the signal.

The mountainous men crouched down on all fours opposite each other, and here evidently occurs the supreme difficulty. Balancing on their heels, with slowly advancing hands, and heads down like two fighting-cocks, when the moment arrives for saying "Off!" something happens, and the fan drops dejectedly. The wrestlers get up, step down, rub their shoulders, drink a little water, talk a bit, and step up again. The former process is repeated, but continually the same hitch occurs, and the man with the fan will not give the signal, and we begin to grow impatient. At last, after perhaps half a dozen such hitches, the signal is given, and the two spring at each other, and grasp and push and pinch and pound and scratch—some get quite nasty scars—and do all they can, in the most unscientific

and amateurish way (from my uninitiated point of view), to throw the opponent. It is all over very quickly, and one is thrown, generally the least heavy. Sometimes he comes down a good bump, and rolls off the little platform with another, and great applause greets the victor. Then two others mount up, and it all begins over again.

Gyp soon refused to bet with me unless I took my turn at the thinnest by contrast, but as that brought us out equal she said we must toss for the fattest, and Gyp always wins a toss.

Cousin Mary continued to smile serenely, she was not going to suggest that we had had enough. The German petty Highness left after five minutes of it. One old Englishman had been muttering under his breath the whole time, but whether at the wrestling, or his wife, one could not tell; and when I said, "Let us go after this turn," it was only on principle that Gyp answered, "No, the one after."

Cousin Mary said, as we wound our way out between planks and ladders and running attendants—

"I hope you liked it, you two?"

"Perfectly ripping! I would not have missed it for anything."

And I admitted, "It was very curious, you know. I think one would have to come to Japan to see it."

"Oh, I am glad you liked it. It is the most expensive entertainment we have been to as yet."

"Were you really bored?" I asked, with a certain compunction.

"Shocked?" asked Gyp threateningly.

"Dear me, no! I took off my glasses at the very first, and I saw nothing to shock me."

"Mother! Oh! *what* I think."

We were to find more traces of our friend Ieyasu, and they were most worthy ones. The splendid group of the Shiba Temples were founded by him

as resting-places for his descendants, and they have an inner sanctuary where the Spirits of the Ancestors are worshipped. They are among the most beautiful temples in Japan. It appears Ieyasu was infringing the right of some very High Priest of the Buddhist faith by fixing on this spot for his Mortuary Temples, and "an embarrassing remonstrance" was made. Ieyasu frankly confesses, "on this occasion I was dumb before him, but at last I found words." After an ingenious excuse, he continues: "From the first I was cognisant of the law, I yet wilfully made an innovation. This should not be done."

One can understand and sympathise with this comment in his "Legacy." "It is no easy matter to make one's practice conform to what one preaches; so that it is incumbent to face one's own self and investigate each particle of conduct with grinding torture."

His dislike to an "innovation" was certainly borrowed from the doctrines of Confucius, for whom he had a great admiration.

It has perhaps been one of the saving graces of the Japanese variety of faiths, that they have enabled her to be only partially influenced by that great Chinese.

The reverence for ancestors—it amounts to the same kind of worship the Roman Catholic Church gives to its saints—has held the Japanese almost as strongly as the Chinese, but they are conscious of so much more than Confucius taught. Ieyasu confirmed the doctrine of revenge enjoined by the "wise and virtuous Confucius," that "you and the injurer of either Master or Father cannot live together under the canopy of heaven," and this in the old feudal times worked out into a grand system of vendetta, and kept the Samurai and Ronins very busy. There was always one big family that had a grudge against another, and no one *could*

bury the hatchet. The gruesome tale of those forty-seven devoted Ronins who revenged their master's death, and then one and all committed hari-kiri themselves, is a standard work, and their graves are still kept fresh and flowered by an understanding people.

But one essential difference may be noted between the Japanese and Chinese peoples. The Chinese, with whom the doctrines of Confucius have ever been the dominant idea, have regarded innovation as necessarily wrong. To look back, not forward, has been their rule. The "Golden Age" of Confucius lay in the past, in the days of the ancient worthies Yaou and Shun, and "innovation" could not help one back into the past! On the other hand, the enterprise and open-mindedness of the Japanese have enabled them to advance where they saw advance was imperative, and though conservative *au fond*, a new idea has a great attraction for them; to be weighed, investigated, not necessarily adopted permanently. Confucius' ideal of the "superior man" and his intense self-control, has been strengthened by the Buddhist doctrine of the necessity of overcoming individual desires, but the old national faith of Shintōism, with its heroic gods linked to earthly descendants, has kept the "strenuous life" before them as a practical ideal, and they have the fighting spirit in their very bones.

On the matter of religion Ieyasu was very liberal. "High and low were to follow their own inclination with regard to religious tenets," but he considered "my body and the bodies of others being born on the 'Empire of the gods' to adopt the teachings of other countries *in toto*, such as the Confucian, Buddhist, or Tâoist doctrine, and to apply one's whole and undivided attention to them, would in short be to desert one's own master, and transfer

A Wistaria Tea-Garden.

Entrance to the Nikko Temples.

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one's fidelity to another. Is not this to forget the origin of one's being?" He makes one exception therefore to this freedom of opinion in "the false and corrupt school" of the Roman Catholics, doubtless because it demanded this forgetfulness. There were no half measures with the great Ieyasu. Roman Catholicism, which had obtained a very real hold in certain districts under the influence of Francis Xavier in 1549, was to be rooted out. Missionaries were finally banished, and all those who held to the faith, some 30,000, were put to death. In 1624 Japan also shut her gates to all foreign commerce, with the exception of a few Dutch, who were allowed to trade in a small way at Nagasaki. It is said that when again missionaries were allowed into Japan in 1873, in some out-of-the-way little villages on the coast there were still to be found those who had treasured the faith brought them by St. Francis, but one can hardly help thinking that it must have been as some other manifestation of the Buddha that the gentle Mother and her Child dwelt in the rough homes of these kindly fisher-folk for those 250 silent years.

Ieyasu himself ascended to the skies as Gongen Sama, with the honour of minor deityhood conferred on him, and he is buried in one of the most beautiful of the many beautiful temples at Nikko.

We paid our respects to him there. I do not know in what way or words the Japanese worship their Ancestors, but to me the idea of this Reverence for the Great Departed, or the Dearly Beloved, has a very strong attraction. Even to recognise the fact that they have "attained," or come nearer, to walking in the Light, and so honouring them and their memory with the title of Saint or Sama, which means Lord, causes no shock to my Protestantly brought up soul. To forget those who

have departed—though they are unknown to history—to talk of them but seldom, and then in pity as "poor dear So-and-so"—ah! better far the Memorial Shelf in every home, the little name tablets, the daily offering of food and wine, and the love and reverence warm in the heart!

They may call it "worship" if they will, but I find in it no trace of heathen darkness.

I could as easily describe Gongen Sama's present abode as attempt to give any idea of Nikko.

"Call no place beautiful till you have seen Nikko" is a Japanese saying, and I think it is true. When I consider those temples, with their gorgeously carved gates, their courtyards of marvellous works of art, bell-towers, pagodas, stone lanterns and fountains, and their inner wealth of carving and lacquer and bronze, my spirit fails me, even as did that of the Queen of Sheba before Solomon's glory; and I remember with wonder that a Japanese ambassador to a European Court found cause to remark, in a tone of quiet irony: "We sent you our works of art, and you called us barbarians; we fight you with your own weapons, and you call us civilised."

Yet now the great Shogun may indeed rest in peace. His dynasty has done its work and passed away, but in "the distant abodes of the Barbarians throughout the four quarters of the globe" the name of Japan is honoured. The Japanese are the outcome of the past, not of the brief spell of European influence that has affected them for the last forty years, and their old traditions, old ideals, have served them too well to be lightly put aside. "Let not future generations be induced to ridicule me as having the heart of a venerable old grandmother," so winds up the famous "Legacy," and though the Sun on the Japanese flag rises higher and higher, its present light cannot dim the glory of its past heroes

CHAPTER XIII

THE HONOURABLE BATH AND SAYONARA

EVERYONE knows that the bath is a great feature of Japanese life, and really Nature has provided them with so many nice, hot, bubbling places for enjoying their baths that they would be ungrateful children did they not take kindly to bathing. The Japanese are not ungrateful children, they love the Earth-Mother with an open-hearted, child-like love,—a love no other nation of their enterprising, progressive spirit seems to have the time to indulge in. They are all of them the "leisured class" when it comes to a fine day in the cherry-blossom time, or to a lovely show of wistaria, peony, or iris flower. And they all love their hot baths,—some of us have that taste in common with them.

The little house-boy in all the hotels of European style would knock at our bedroom doors in the morning: "Bars ready. You please come." Then in as elegant a costume as we could manage—Gyp in a kimono made for the foreign figure but with the Japanese dragon rampant up the back, Cousin Mary in a study in mauve irises, and I in a wonderful design taken from Hiroshigi's famous wave—we would follow the dapper little black legs and white coat of the "boy" down passages and stairs—it was always a Sabbath day's journey—till he flung open a door with a bow and a flourish.

Then more little boys, bowing low, received

one, and opened little wooden compartments, where a deep wooden bath sunk in the floor sent forth a steamingly hot invitation, "You please have bars, he ready."

Afterwards the procession repeated itself, and the guests of the hotel were generally strolling round between seven and nine o'clock preceded by a boy, and trying not to see each other.

It is, however, only in Dame Nature's own hot-water establishments that a nice bamboo pipe conducts the water from her warm breast—flavoured maybe with sulphur or iron—straight into your wooden tub, and you feel, even without a little pamphlet to tell you so, that it must be very good for you.

There are many places called Yumoto (source of hot water) in Japan, and there, if you are not conventional, as we poor Occidentals cannot avoid being, you may take your tub with an open door, and without the least troubling over other people and their eyes; it is all a matter of custom, and each nation has habits peculiar in the sight of others. But this will only happen in the unsophisticated country-places.

I recommend the delicious baths at Myanoshita, a delicious place in every way, and as everyone goes there it is very refined and Europeanised. But the little, almost out-of-the-way, Ikao, for a really natural hot-spring place, pleased us even better. You cannot get away from the bubble of the water. All up the village street, which climbs the mountain slope,—and you must climb too, up very steep steps!—the irrepressible bubble and steam breaks out and trickles down. Fortunately the sulphur is absent here; in some places it is no pure Nature's cleansing stream that is suggested, but a devil's cauldron, which you must be careful to keep to windward of you.

The Steps of Ikao.

The School Play-ground, Ikao.

To face page 283.

We arrived there after hours of train and miles of rickshaws. The lovely mountains surrounded us, the flower-bedecked, winding road led us gently upward, weigela—ah! you cannot know how lovely weigela can be until you see it growing wild in Japan in May—offered us sprays of every colour in pinks and purples, deutzia and spirea stretched out branches of snowy bloom, the nightingale, uguisu, sang us a sweet and unknown song, and the inquisitive babies waved little podgy fingers at us, crying "Ohio," and a bowing little landlady welcomed us.

The wooden hotel was clinging to the mountain-side; below we looked down into the school play-ground, covered, half of it, with a shelter of wistaria, white long trails hanging from tender green leaves, and under it the children played "kiss in the ring" without the kiss. Inside the school they were instructed in the kindergarten system, which has been in use in Japan for twenty-five years. We also had a little garden to our hotel, with a lake the size of a hearth-rug, and irises and dwarf azaleas were reflected there.

We were not entirely on the Japanese régime; they gave us European food, with tables and chairs, but our futons were rolled in when required, and a fine green dragon and a very stately kakemono (long hanging picture) completed the furniture of our bedroom. That should satisfy any well-organised mind; but we were further indulged, with a small table, a tiny basin, and a teapot for the water not provided by the "honourable bath." We had a grand collection of metal mirrors by this time. Tokimoto had given in over this matter, and he even helped Gyp to rub them bright with any spare glove she could pounce on, so we were really well supplied with all necessaries.

After the very Europeanised atmosphere of

Yokohama and Tokyo, we felt we needed to be Japanned again as thoroughly as time and opportunity permitted. We had even so far yielded to circumstances and the big European hotel in Tokyo as to drive in a barouche! Tokimoto had decidedly wished it, though we preferred rickshaws. So drive we did, on two occasions, and the one nice touch about those drives was our attendant out-runner. He went before and helped the old women, and picked up the babies out of the way, the "Ough's" and "Eeh's" of the driver not being considered sufficient warning. It was quite strange to meet the horse again, but the bicycle is common property, though the effect of a kimono tucked up for the purpose of riding never quite lost its savour.

We came to this more or less out-of-the-way Ikao, as the best we could do from the beaten path—beaten hard by the feet of endless tourists. Ikao is still quite unspoiled, and much visited as a summer resort by the people themselves. Being over 2500 feet high it is to a certain extent freed from the mosquito, which can be a plague in the hot weather. We encountered no plagues, not even the much talked of flea! Poor Miss Bird's recollections were so warped by these miseries that anyone reading her *Unbeaten Track* would wisely thank their stars for England and stay at home. Doubtless there still are mosquitoes and fleas, but the hot weather had not yet reached the necessary incubating point.

Here we found a peace which comes to one but seldom in the rush of life. It was as though the world stood still in its happiest moment, and gave us time to feel the heart-beats from the great Mother, source of it all; and to realise how that throbbing energy was manifested in the myriad flowers, the bubbling stream, the shooting rice,

the birds, the fireflies, and the happy, contented people who lived so near to Nature's heart.

We laid aside guide-books, even the strange mania for buying that seizes people in Japan,—Sir Edwin Arnold has said somewhere that one would sell one's grandfather's waistcoat to furnish fresh funds,—even that acquisitive faculty was at rest, and we were content *to be*.

Tokimoto occasionally considered it our duty—or his duty—that we should also *do*, and then we walked, or were carried, for the paths were too rough for rickshaws, and visited some spot said to be more favoured than another, and possessing a waterfall of more than usual volume. On one occasion our way was to be steep and stony, so in order to be prepared for the worst Tokimoto provided rough straw sandals to be tied on over our boots. They were very difficult to keep fixed, and were as much plague as profit, but the effect when on was like that of a roughed horse. We had only two carrying chairs between us, for Cousin Mary said we were growing indolent, which was perfectly true in this Land of the Lotus, and she threatened our figures with every species of disaster. All the same she bade us mount on the shoulders of the four coolies, and did not venture herself until she saw the precarious position was not only safe but pleasant, for they shift the chair with its long poles from one shoulder to the other in very quick and deft fashion. Her daughter showed her her motives with pleasing frankness, but allowed her to walk as she said her figure needed it more than her own. I am slowly but surely recognising the fact that Gyp is good for us, and I even admit this without any disagreeable reference in the back of my mind to medicine so extolled. In fact I am beginning to enjoy the revealing of hidden things, for we do hide our

motives under quite a bushel of false reasons. If, however, I can catch Gyp out at the universal game, I pounce on her without scruple, and, as our old friend Ieyasu would say, "Make her face her own self, and investigate each particle of conduct with grinding torture!"

It was a long and delightful walk—or ride, and fresh green woods, tall cryptomerias, wild blooms, quaint wayside shrines and tea-houses, and the singing of birds was the setting. A picturesque waterfall was the object or end of our journey, that needed but its own delightful self as reason, where we found a shrine to Benten, one of the "lady-Buddhas" of this very much "attained" land of Nippon. Benten is one of the seven deities whose specialty is luck.

"I want some luck," said Gyp; "but I am not quite sure from which side I want it to come. Perhaps my visit to Lady Benten will clear the atmosphere."

"Out with the difficulty, Gyp; let us apply old Ieyasu's 'grinding torture,'" I suggested.

"No, I am not ready for it yet. I quite approve of the gentleman, and am glad you read him up. I think he has done you good."

"Thank you, Gyp," I said meekly, which shows how beautifully my education was working. But Gyp did not further commend me; she said, with sudden seriousness.—

"Has it ever struck you, Helen, that it is very difficult to be true, really true to yourself, as you wish yourself to be? If you arrive at that I suppose you 'cannot then be false to any man'; " and I suddenly knew what Gyp was thinking about.

"It follows as the light the day" was all I wanted to answer, and all she wanted me to say.

There are two giants, distinctly of Chinese extraction, and kindred to those who guard the

Buddha's ground in Siam, who are in Japan also found at the gates of the temples. They are big and grotesque, vivid in colour and terrible of visage. They are called Ni-ōs, and their sheltering niches, one on either side, form the outer entrance to many temples. They are generally bespattered with tiny pellets of paper, and the idea among the faithful and ignorant is that any wish written on the paper, chewed into a pellet and jerked out of the mouth at the Ni-ōs, if it safely adheres indicates the fulfilment of that wish—if it falls short, its failure.

We passed two such formidable monsters, and Gyp challenged Toki to get a pellet to stick.

Toki, whose natural reserve had long since melted, forthwith prepared his pellet in approved fashion.

"But write on it, Toki—write your wish."

"I not believing sose nonsense, Miss Gyp he making fun."

"Give me your pencil, Toki. There, now we will see if I can get it to go so far. Right you are! Now, I suppose that is settled. Helen, you try——"

But I am no good at gymnastic exercises of the mouth. "What was your wish, Gyp?" I asked.

"Oh, it mustn't be told. It is like wishing and bowing to the new moon, telling spoils it."

"You went as near as you could, Gyp; you are meeting your wish half-way."

"For a sensible girl, Gyp, you are ridiculously foolish; and I think it is very vulgar to spit," said Cousin Mary.

"It is very difficult to do it neatly—try yourself, Mummie!"

But Cousin Mary seated herself in the chair and was carried off, looking dignified.

Was it the will of the Ni-ōs thus appealed to, or

had Gyp's wish anything to do with it, that after this excursion the letters that arrived next morning had an unsettling effect? Time was up. Cousin Mary, the Arbitrator, turned to guide-books and trains, talked of berths to be booked across the Pacific, and I suddenly realised that we were to leave Japan.

Gyp says I am a very adhesive thing, I must have a sticky side to me like a stamp, I send out tentacles and take root. Her metaphors were mixed, but her meaning plain. I told her this was not the case, but I did not like to pack away pleasant experiences. To say "good-bye" to Japan was a dreadful ordeal, and what, after all, was coming next? Seventeen days of perhaps very unrestful Pacific!

Gyp thought for a moment, as though she wished to explain, and then she said something different.

"We will take you to another temple—the Mormon one! There's something to look forward to!"

I shuddered. It seemed an insult to even think of that unspeakable faith, or people, in Japan.

"I have been there, Gyp, so I know. Wild horses won't get me into that blank dreariness again."

"You and I are going to have a swimming match in the Salt Lake, where one cannot sink. That is written, Nell; but we shall have other things to do before then."

I felt Gyp was taking us in hand again—Gyp or the Ni-ōs; but when the tide has turned, and you are being borne home, you let yourself drift with Buddha-like calm.

So the Picture of Peace passed, and after the hurry of modern European life of the Bund at Yokohama, the collecting of forgotten orders from wily Chinese tailors, who appeared again as by magic

and " makee alle light and leady " now " missee going Amellica," we were conducted to the steamer by an excited but sad Tokimoto.

" You coming again—making real big visit—Japan 'ery much more to see. We going Northern Island, we going Kizuki—you coming—you surely coming again."

Oh yes—we were coming again. May the stars in their courses so will it!

" I shall come for my honeymoon, Toki; be ready to welcome us," called Gyp, leaning over the side of the steamer. We all knew Tokimoto's views on the wife's position in double harness, and Cousin Mary added—

" That may depend on someone else, then, Gyp."

" Oh no, it won't, because in that case I should honeymoon alone! "

We said " Sayonara," and called it again and again till Toki's dark figure with fluttering handkerchief was but a speck in the distance, till Fuji-san's snow-capped crown was veiled in clouds, till Japan was but a faint grey line over a grey and rolling sea; then Gyp said in determined tones, " Auf-wieder-sehen."

They are beautiful words—I wish we had just their English equivalent.

I went below, to the small cabin of three restricted berths where for seventeen days the severe test of close companionship was to be applied. We were on board the crowded *Nippon Maru*; we were flying the " Rising Sun," our captain was English, the purser American, the doctor German, the crew mostly Japanese, the boys Chinese. One felt as cosmopolitan as may be, and I was wondering, as I arranged the contents of my cabin trunk, where the East became the West, when a knock at the door made me raise my head, and a small figure with golden hair, a thin inquiring face, and white muslin

garments floating round her, entered—at least entered as far as she could.

"I am Miss Juliet Burnett," said a voice that rang of the Stars and Stripes. "Do you know where the ladies' bāthroom is?"

I rose out of my trunk. Why did this radiant vision seek information of me? "I am not sure," I began; "but if you go down those steps, perhaps——"

"No, you don't have to do that. Come right along here, and I will show you, and you can say what time you would like your bāth fixed. I must fit you all in."

She was the stewardess, and after she took me in hand I never felt "East" any more. Right there it was wiped out, and the flitting white form of "Unsere Vestal," as a German friend on board named her, and the unmistakable voice, covered those five thousand six hundred miles of weary waste of water, and transported me to the Land of the Dollar; and fainter and fainter grew the gentle little pipe, and fainter the vision, of the babies of Japan as they waved fat little fingers, calling, "Sayonara! Sayonara!"

Breakfast, tiffin, tea, and dinner succeeded each other in regular monotony. The *Maru* squirmed and shook and rattled, rough or fine, and so we ploughed onward through the sea, brown, blue, or green, but always sea—endless, endless, infinite sea. No ships, no islands, nothing but sea; and at night sky and stars, with the Southern Cross for a time lying low on the horizon, where the two vast expanses of sea and sky met, making our world round, and keeping us alone in it—quite, quite alone.

One day the monotony was doubled. We were informed that we had to live through two Tuesdays—eat two Tuesday breakfasts, dinners, teas, sleep two Tuesday nights—before we were allowed to move

on to Wednesday. And if anything could have made us yearn more strongly to be going the other way, and skipping Tuesday altogether, surely that double day would have done it.

Gyp voted the *Nippon Maru* the slowest of all steamers we had yet encountered. But she found one Englishman who could play bridge, and I found a German with the same talent—or he found me. I do not know why, and Gyp failed to give me a satisfactory explanation, but all Germans hope to rub up their English on my conversation, as though I were a strop to sharpen their tongues.

There were several large parties of Americans on board, one stout, pleasant lady, "Cousin Joole," with two dashing young "Belles" in hand. Gyp said they were not "Belles," but I knew better. *They* knew they were, and when that fact is borne in on the inner consciousness of an American girl, it answers the purpose just as well as perfection of face or figure. They formed a great contrast to another group, two quiet, pale, thoughtful girls,—Girtonians we called them,—travelling with a grey, self-effacing little lady—in fact, the most reserved and self-contained party one could meet. They might have stood for typical Englishwomen had not Gyp's existence and claim to the flag been so very apparent. At which I rejoiced, for why should the deprecating shoulders, square waist-lines, up-tilted skirts that some of our country-women affect, pass as typically English? My German, Herr Professor Behren—Gyp kindly gave him me—was attracted by this quiet trio, and his big laugh raised ghosts of smiles on their serious faces. He told me—

"Sey know everysing—ze Greek, ze Shogun, ze 'Estory—and sey keep him so tight, so bottled you say? I speak ze Cherman wis 'em, but wis Fraulein I make ze progress—is it not so? I fear

me wis zose ladies, sey have so moch intelligence!"

That was pleasant for me! But I agreed with him; they were intelligent to the tips of their tightly-drawn-back hair, and I sometimes wondered what the effect would be on their manners and morals if their hair was becomingly dressed. Would they treat themselves more lightly if it were allowed to fluff?

One has time for these questions on board.

Mrs. Van—she had a long Dutch name she said was the oldest in "Noo York," but she appeared to be contented with only "Mrs. Van"—was a very smart lady. She did not see me until one day she found several eager palms stretched out before me imploringly. Gyp gave my talent away, saying I ought to do something to enliven the dull old *Maru*. Then Mrs. Van beamed, and placed a much-bejewelled and well-manicured little hand in mine, and during the space of two hours revealed a great deal of her life and character to me. They all do it; all that is required of the palmist is to say, with thoughtful voice and indicating finger, "I see you are impulsive, and your heart and head lines——" and they are off. I think Mrs. Van had much past, more than she allowed. "Cousin Joole" laughed at her thirty-five years,—everyone on board knew she was only thirty-five,—and said "she was no better than she should be," which seemingly innocent and quite unassailable remark has a way of suggesting almost gigantic vistas of deep and dark doings; but I can only say Mrs. Van's love affairs, as revealed by herself, were all quite beautiful, and should have been very elevating to the many victims.

An energetic lady, Mrs. Winter, who claimed the Universe as her nationality, tried to draw us all together in improving games and Shakesperian

puzzles, but long chairs are difficult to move, and groups grow quickly into fixtures; so she found but lazy response, and Gyp finally declared she "was actually tired of her own self"!

In the midst of this monotony suddenly rose up Honolulu. There are other islands in the Hawaiian Group, which I had learnt to know as the Sandwich Islands, always connected in my mind with the eating of Captain Cook; now the modern child is told he was not made into sandwiches after all! It must be a great strain on the brain to have none of these pleasant pegs on which to hang up hard-and-dry facts. Honolulu stands out as one of the heavenly spots of earth, like Ceylon; a place of brilliant colouring, where trees and shrubs look more green and beautiful than anywhere else in the world, where the earth is firmer, the houses in delicious gardens more inviting, and the people more fascinating. And this may be true really or relatively; after ten days of undiluted water the attraction Mother Earth has for eye and foot is very great.

We were not allowed to land without careful inspection. Doctors boarded our ship, and the steerage of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans were passed over with experienced hands for signs of the tell-tale plague. In the saloon a lady medico took possession of us, and we solemnly sat all round sucking thermometers until she was satisfied. Our pulses beat only with impatience to be off to that smiling land, but we had to be good and obedient, for the Land of Freedom laid then and there a firm hand on us, even though it was but a woman's, and I wished many times that our own little island retaliated, and was prudent and protecting in like fashion.

Then followed twenty short hours of bliss: firm, unthrobbing ground; stately avenues of trees in

bloom, with cool bungalows in brilliant gardens. The palms and branching ferns all spoke of the tropics, and thrilled one with joy. We stayed at the Mooana Hotel, where the surf rolls in and the bathers roll with it; and we drove and walked and filled our hours of freedom full with beautiful visions. Our driver, a German, born to American citizenship, explained to us the peaceable annexation of the Hawaiian Islands by the Stars and Stripes.

"Sugar is what they mostly make their money by in these islands, and the U.S. was naterally their chief market. So when that Government doubled the duty on Hawaiian sugar, it was like to purty near ruin these fellahs heäre. They asked to be annexed; sugar could then go in free. Guess that souted both parties!"

When we collected together again on the *Nippon Maru* in the early morning, most of our hats and necks were adorned with the flowery garlands made by the clever fingers of the natives, —they were like the top-knot wreaths of far-away Siam; but many other flowers had been selected, carnations and roses gave their colour and sweetness, and we looked like a party ready for the 1st of May. I noticed that the very-much-begarlanded German unwound his flowers and placed them over the necks of the grey and intelligent Girtonians. He gave them to both—but only one blushed.

And after that came seven more days of sea, and then the "Golden Gates" opened, and in we went.

CHAPTER XIV

IN AT THE GOLDEN GATES

I CANNOT conceive a more suggestive or delightful name for a port than that given to the entrance of the harbour of San Francisco—"The Golden Gates"! Surely it must be a heavenly place to which they lead! We are told that St. Peter examines all credentials before he allows a pass to travellers through his guarded Gate, so perhaps one should not be astonished that America thinks fit to follow so undeniable an example. Consequently there is a taste of Purgatory before the traveller passes into the Land of Freedom.

A conscientious examination takes place before one leaves the ship. Papers are signed, and Ieyasu's appeal to "face one's own self" and one's belongings is strongly put. I do not think he would have approved of the result of the "grinding torture."

For us the matter was simplified; being but birds of passage through this protected land, we placed all debatable articles in one box, and sent them through to New York "in bond." Thus freed in conscience, we declared nothing; but for the home-going American the case was otherwise. The way they all took it was very instructive. Mrs. Van declared she could not really tell if she had any things not allowed by the law that limits one to the narrowest necessities.

"No silks—curios—embroideries?" asked a stern and incredulous official.

"Why, I can't really tell—I think I will leave it. The officials can look."

Mrs. Van was going to trust to luck—or its equivalent. She had been there before.

"Cousin Joole" and the "Belles" were quite bold. They were natives of San Francisco. They had nothing to declare. One old lady and gentleman were more than particular, and to my surprise, these transparently guileless old people had more "grinding torture" applied to them than seemed justifiable. His new socks and their price and number were fully noted. She thought of everything, and yet their fate was sad.

In a desolate, bare, and open shed—an absolute disgrace to civilisation—we and our boxes were planted, and for hours we awaited the pleasure of some dozen officials, who at their own goodwill made havoc of everyone's belongings. No entreaties would bring their notice to our humble pile, so we strolled round and watched the fate of other people.

The poor "Belles" attracted our attention. Ah, one may not always back one's luck and one's looks! A few victims on an incoming ship are absolute necessities. Where would the official character be if no large declarations were followed by no large discoveries? Victims there must be, and luck played it low down on the "Belles."

I fear Gyp and I laughed, though we did it considerately out of sight; but as the pink ball dresses, the pretty muslins, and elegant jupons were ruthlessly shaken out, in all their folds rolls of silks and embroideries and grass lawn were discovered; the stuffing of boots turned out to be carved ivories, purses and curios were revealed in every corner, and the poor "Belles" sank on an open box, and the flush of indignation turned to tremulous tears. Their fate was truly cruel, and "Cousin Joole"

arrived at the exasperating stage of "I told you so!" and "Really, gurls, this is too bad!"

Mrs. Van sailed by at that moment, preceded by three huge arks; she looked triumphant and happy.

"Dear, dear," she softly murmured to me, "what a pretty how-d'ye-do! Poor things, I am *quite* sorry! All those lovely silks! Land's sake! and they will all be confiscated. My! what a heap of dollars they must have cost—and will cost, too, before they buy them back again. But they were foolish—and their Poppa so well known, too," in a lower voice, "for his keenness on *protection*, mind you! What a time the *Star* and *Express* will have over them! Are you through, Miss Gresham? Oh, I am—I had no difficulty."

"Cousin Joole" seized my arm: "Say, is that woman through all right? My! however did she manage? the cartloads of things I am dead sure she had, and never a one declared! Well, well, some people have the devil's own luck—I suppose he looks after them."

Two other friends came up at this moment, and were full of the commiseration that must be hard to bear. They were through, oh yes—they had declared *some* things, "really it is safest, though one never can tell. There are those two poor dear old things just simply broken up. You know she did declare all she could think, but my! that man was just nasty. He found a grass lawn tea-cloth; guess she'd forgotten it, and tucked it away inside a waist. Why, they just had everything out after that, and confiscated all their little things. It is hard on them; I doubt but what they'll feel terribly over the disgrace. The papers make such headlines out of these things. But, oh! you poor dears——!"

Indeed the "Belles" had no pity to spare. What sort of a newspaper welcome would theirs be?

They had a right to expect their return and their good looks to be commented on, but this!—Tears drowned all visions.

I returned to Cousin Mary, whom I had left seated in impatient calm on one of her boxes. There was nowhere else to sit, and I found it was now our turn.

Cousin Mary stood by her opened box, and an inspector was half inside it. Mrs. Winter, in passing, whispered, "Be as sweet as pie." If she meant more, she might have said it; but seeing Cousin Mary's strained expression, I exclaimed—

"But did you tell him we were sending that big box through 'in bond'?"

Cousin Mary nodded as though words failed her, and the inspector looked up.

"I am going through this one all the same, marm."

"Certainly," and I tried to feel "sweet as pie."

"What's this?"

"Face cream," Cousin Mary answered.

He opened it—threw it on one side, dived again, and brought out a neat roll of pink silk. Any initiated eye could have recognised them.

"What's these?"

"My vests," but as they unrolled themselves further she added, "Combinations."

Gyp gave a wild laugh, and walked away to recover herself.

"They're silk," said the man sternly.

"I always wear silk," with great dignity said Cousin Mary.

I was getting indignant, and forgetting the pie-like crust of sweetness.

"Really—these things are all personal clothes, worn and washed many times. Are you going through each box like this?"

"Yes, marm. What's this?"

"Boots, and old ones too."

But he undid them.

He dragged out dresses and bodices.

"Where did you get all these gowns?"

"In London." Cousin Mary's eyes asked, "What next?"

"There seems a good many. Guess you don't want such a lot travelling round."

"Well, *I* guess I *do*." Cousin Mary took a little indignant walk to restore outward calm.

I thought I would try Mrs. Winter's receipt again.

"You know we are not idiots; we have packed away all contraband goods."

No answer. He had begun on another box.

"There are eight boxes altogether; are you going through each one of them?"

"Yes, marm."

"Like this?"

"Yes, marm."

So I retired too.

It was Gyp's box he turned to next, and I began to help Cousin Mary repack.

The inquisitorial voice went on—

"What's this?"

"My pocket-handkerchiefs. You can leave them alone."

A much-rolled-up package appeared.

"What's this?"

"My Buddha. Don't undo him."

But he did, and opened the lacquer case.

"Your Buddha?"

"Yes. I am a Buddhist. I take him round for my comfort. The notice we had given us specially said 'things for one's comfort were allowed.' He is mine. Helen, come and have a look—you need it. Dear, placid Person!" That was addressed to Buddha, not me.

The inspector was examining him with interest.

"Is that so? Now can you tell me the difference between Buddhism and Vedism?"

Gyp was at sea, but not floored.

"The difference! well, one is older than the other."

"Guess that's so. Ever heard of a Swami called Vivicananda?"

"Vivi——" Gyp paused. "Helen, have you? What is it?"

I rose from the trunk. "Yes, I have heard him lecture."

"My—he was a talker! Came to our World's Religion Congress, he did. Read his books? They *are* books now. Guess he'd take the shine out of your Buddha! But he's dead now."

"So is Buddha," said his disciple eagerly, and not to be outdone.

He placed the lacquer case on one side, and Buddha was afterwards reported to a higher tribunal, but finally allowed to pass if confined with other treasures in the box "in bond." So Gyp had to console herself with a look to last some weeks. After which the inspector returned indefatigably to his work of rummaging and ruining my best evening dresses.

"You seem to travel round with a good lot of things."

My only answer was to point to Mrs. Winter's huge trunks awaiting removal, with the necessary sign on their covers.

"That lady has twice as much luggage as I have. She lives in America, and not one of her boxes has ever been opened."

The man screwed up his face. "Who examined them?"

"I don't know—I don't care—I am dead tired. We have been waiting here two mortal hours—we have had our clothes ruined—and what you are doing it for I can't imagine!"

"Bin here before?" was his answer.

"Never here—and I'll never come in at your 'Golden Gates' again. I wish I were back in Japan—anywhere. This is no place for a free-born Britisher."

"Helen's off," I heard Gyp say to her mother.

"Come now—what's the matter with the States? We have to have protection."

"Have it—I don't care. But worry your own people and ruin their clothes. I won't give you a chance again. It's absolutely insulting."

"You have not been insulted, marm."

"Well, we wouldn't stand it in *our* country, that's quite certain."

A good American—and they are all good in that sense—cannot tolerate any comparison detrimental to his country, especially with the old one. The inspector began marking the rest of the boxes without opening them.

"I guess it's all right for us—I guess it's made us a rich people, and I guess you get at the dollars *some* way in your blessed country. Now can I do anything more for you, marm?"

"No, *thank* you. You have done more than enough."

In the cab going to the hotel, Cousin Mary said—

"It's no use, dear; you only take it out of yourself. He went on just the same."

"He didn't—he left three boxes untouched. One was yours, too, you ungrateful woman!"

"Helen thinks she shut him up! It was his glimpse of Buddha turned his heart, not your energetic tirade!"

"I astonished him. I did it: but I am exhausted."

They only laughed.

In the big—oppressively big—hotel, which has since been burned down, we found the German

conducting the three quiet ladies to the dining-room.

"Sis is ze biggest hotel in ze vorld! Ze Customs are ze biggest drobble von can find. I go to eat ze biggest dinner and pay ze biggest bill in sis biggest country in ze vorld! You too? Ach! you seek zen ze biggest sleep. I hope you find 'im."

The Englishman passed us: "Any trouble? Beastly nuisance, aren't they? Wanted tippin'."

"But we *had* nothing to declare," and Cousin Mary added—

"I thought they would put us in prison if we tried!"

"Not much! My man as good as asked for it—and he got it. Most people just drop a note—or their card. It's the only way."

"Well, I am glad he got nothing out of us," I exclaimed vindictively, "the little fiend!"

But I am sure of it—that is what he was looking for.

The next morning Gyp said she had made a discovery, had I not noticed it? "Your German," and she emphasised the *your*, "is engaged, or ought to be, to the smallest of the intelligent ladies. Is it not beautiful? There is a quiet excitement about all three of them that can be felt like an electric shock." Gyp did not believe that any of them had ever spoken to a man before; they must all have lived with "Princess Ida" in her Ladies' College. Now the beautiful German prince had come—and they did not object. "No more did the princess really, did she? No more does any sane woman," ended up Gyp.

Herr Behren gave me his confidence, and after much rich sentiment he explained: "Sose ladies have each von a good fortune, sey have no rich clothes, sey have too moch intelligence, but Beatrice she makes ze cooking equal as she makes ze Greek.

In all is she intelligent, and I find ve do lov each one ze oser vell. I am Professor, it shall go good."

I hoped it would—and we shook hands till my arm ached.

I took my Kamakura Buddha to be developed, and I found Gyp in the telegraph office on my return. She began talking quickly.

"You know Mother is bent on going to the Yosemite Valley. Can you read him up, Helen? Here is a dear little book, learning made easy with pictures. It is not as difficult as the Shoguns."

"Gyp, I can no more; my mind is still full of Shintō and Shoguns, Tokimoto and Ieyasu. Why did you bring us here?"

"I! Oh, I like that. We had to get home—this is the way. We might as well go to this Valley, and then we can be back here in time."

"In time for what?"

"Oh, in time to go on to Salt Lake, or wherever else we intend to go." Gyp was confused.

Cousin Mary said she thought we ought to see the most lovely valley in the world, with the biggest trees in the world, drive through the trunk of one of them in a coach and four——

"You have been talking to Herr Behren—is he going?"

"Everyone is going."

"How awful!" I answered, but half of me was still in Japan.

If I were to write the guide-book which Gyp assures me I shall end by writing, I should warn travellers against the Yosemite Valley in the month of July. Not that there is "anything the matter" with the Valley or the way to it—it is unique and lovely, wonderful and interesting, all that the little paper book Gyp had presented me with claimed for it; but—the dust! No words of tongue or pen could give an adequate idea of the horrors of the dust that

for seventy miles of marvellous scenery choked even the inner recesses of our brain cells, and turned us out at the end indistinguishable grey monuments, more like mummies than men.

I have often found, to reverse the well-known order, that the good things of a journey live hereafter, the evil are interred with the last coupon of the tickets; but all the beauties of that wondrous little valley have to be reached, even in memory, through clouds of choking dust.

Oh, the pity of it! In May, when the roads have scarcely recovered from the deep winter snows, that drive must be one of pure delight; but after weeks of the hot sun of summer, the horses' hoofs and the heavy wheels of the big brakes raise an impenetrable cloud. They talk about and advertise "oiled roads," and for the first twenty miles after leaving the railway terminus, where one is ejected on to the hot plains after a night's shaky journey from San Francisco, a smell of petrol and less dust is to be perceived, but this is an expensive and not enduring remedy, and has not been continued.

The Indians were in possession of this wild "park," and the curious split in its mountain fastnesses that forms the Yosemite Valley, not so many years ago. Now they share it with their masters; they live easier lives, they love the dollar, and they die out.

The picturesque touches of the world's life get slowly but surely obliterated before the advance of the white man's civilisation; but nothing—nothing that the hand of man can ever fashion, or the brain of man invent—will be able to touch the mighty grandeur of these mountain peaks of the Sierra Nevadas, or spoil the wonderful gorge that, like a sudden rift, opens up in the heart of them, and that puzzles the wisest intellect to account for its appearance.

The names of the hotels where we paused for

lunch, and slept after our first day's drive, recalled the Indian occupation,—soft-sounding Ahwahnee and Wawona! the originality of the present owners is not shown in their choice of names,—and it is open to question if the modern spirit can devise a new and suggestive name, any more than it can build a cathedral or paint a Holy Family. I wonder what the World Spirit has lost in its forward movement?

After shaking out cloaks and veils and beating the dust from hair and eyelashes, we could see enough to laugh at our fellow-passengers. Herr Behren and his three ladies—the ease with which he adopted them all was charming to behold—had occupied the box-seat and the one behind. He more resembled a dusty bottle covered with cobwebs than a portly but trimly bearded German professor. His gentle Beatrice patted him round ineffectively, but he greatly enjoyed the process, and we soon heard his big laugh—he has cultivated "ze biggest in ze vorld" to harmonise with his surroundings—as he arranged for an early start to the Big Trees next morning.

Cousin Mary returned from the office of the hotel with a woebegone countenance.

"That man in there says we *must* get up at six o'clock, and *must* start at eight with all the other people, and *must* drive round the Big Trees. I said I wanted a quiet day here, and a carriage to ourselves; but he goes on saying 'you do this and that' until I feel like a silly school-child!"

"But what cheek! I am not going to get up at six o'clock to-morrow; he may say *must* all he likes," said Gyp.

"Oh, how I wish we had Toki!" sighed Cousin Mary, and we all groaned in company.

"Let me go and tackle him," I said.

"I will come too, to keep your hair smooth," was Gyp's thoughtful offer.

I had travelled in America before, and found that every conductor and official was a man and a brother. I had the most exalted idea of the national politeness of the men, despite my remembrance of Mr. Alexander B. Binks, but I had not known the Californians, and they still need to be schooled by the Union they should be proud to belong to.

Out of a reformatory I can conceive of no more arbitrary manners or methods than those employed by the keeper of the Wawona Hotel.

"Now listen here—you git up six o'clock—breakfast seven—doors of eating-room shut sharp at eight—nothing to be had after that. Then you drive along o' the rest and see the Mariposa Big Trees—back here by eleven—git some lunch and off you go to the Valley with another lot of horses. See? That's so—pass along, please. I have to attend to this lady."

I waited, chewing the cud, till that lady was finished with; then I tried to have my innings.

I asked if a separate carriage and horses were a possibility, and "he wouldn't say they wasn't," but we must keep to the order, and he began all over again.

"We *won't*," I said, with such surprising firmness that he paused for a second, and I got in. Gyp said I waved the Union Jack and sang "Rule Britannia" until he gave in out of sheer exhaustion; but the one thing I was told we should *not* have, was any breakfast after eight o'clock next morning.

We "laid low and said noffing," but did get our breakfast. The young ladies who kindly waited on us at dinner—and the young gentlemen too, for that matter—are students or teachers, who during the summer vacation take their holiday and save some dollars in this laudable way. But they are not to the manner born; they like you to know that not only are they your equals, but very much your superiors,

and you offer them a quite expected gratuity with fear and trembling.

Gyp made friends with one more or less friendly disposed girl, and she smuggled some tea to our rooms after the brake load of "driven cattle" had departed in obedient hurry.

We heard Herr Behren's laugh as he summoned "Mamachen" to mount, but he is more accustomed to the tight hand of officialdom than we are.

So in peace and quiet we started later for our drive to the Big Trees, and spent some happy hours beneath their soothing silence.

Surely there were giants in those days! We are but worms of earth, and do not match the magnificent proportions of this world hidden away in the vast land of California. In one of Mrs. Meynell's delightful essays she points out that "man is the unit by which Nature is measurable," and that "the body of man composes with the mass and the detail of the world," but he seems of no account in this hidden world of mighty surrounding peaks. "The measure" here was for the gods! and they have left these trees behind them, to tell of the world's "unit" in prehistoric times. On the heights of a mountain-side is the famous Mariposa Big Tree Grove, mightiest monarchs that ever raised stately heads to the skies. They, those Titans of the inexplorable Past, had colossal doings in their days, and, like the gods of Valhalla, they surely passed away in the wildest conflagration the world has ever seen. These huge trees, of unknown antiquity, bear the scars on their furrowed trunks of a deadly fire; some are half charred away, yet live lustily still, and through the heart of one our coach and four horses passed as through a tunnel. The forest has been refurnished with trees, pines of no mean stature, but they are as children, and their ruddy stems, though now ringed with some five

or six hundred years, bear no mark of the fire that would have burnt them up like matchwood.

At their feet grow the Mariposa lily, most daintily pencilled and coloured of all wild flowers; it graciously restored to one the necessary sense of proportion, and one's own significance in the landscape. One's hand could hold a bunch.

The next morning we started in the appointed brake with other obedient passengers, and through the wonderful winding road, by hill and down dale, over rushing floods and "corduroyed" roads, with four dashing horses driven by a Yankee who did indeed know his business, and in the accompanying cloud of dust, we reached the Yosemite Valley.

"It is the greatest gorge of the World, if Harmony and Beauty and Sublimity, if Wealth of Wall and Waterfall, of Pinnacle and Dome, if Beauty of the Thing Underfoot and of That Bending to the Touch, and of That which Awes by its Grandeur, Be Greatness."

Thus the guide-book—and it is quite true.

I felt no ambition to climb any of the surrounding points,—neither El Capitan, nor Glacier Point, nor Eagle Peak, nor Holy Dome,—I was content to sit on the verandah and watch the happy trout in the stream below, or stroll to Mirror Lake and see the world reversed in its tranquil depths. But Gyp was restless—was it the air of this land of highly-strung people, where the Here and Now is always struggling to be the There and Then as well, or was it the contents of a telegram of which she had not spoken and to which, until she did speak, I could make no reference?

So Gyp found that my duty was to mount a Mexican saddle and—a divided skirt being provided with the horse—to accompany her to "ze biggest view," which Herr Behren declared was

really "of ze most vondervoll." He had ordered horses for that expedition, but his ladies were great walkers, as he found out; and I think that gentle, firm little trio will be quite good for his figure.

So in the early morning we tried the experiment of "sitting on the Edge of the Universe and gazing on Eternity with its Limitless Compass."

Literally the world lay at our feet, but our feet were resting in space, and I could not enjoy the vision of eternity when so very little a slip would send one there. I crawled ignominiously backward from the airy height of Glacier Point, and entreated Gyp to come and analyse her sensations from a position of greater *apparent* safety.

"I love to feel that all the unknown can be so near. What would it be like to jump? Just think, Helen!"

"Well, you would miss a great many other experiences if you cut things short with that jump. Or else you would have to come back and begin all over again. Come over here, Gyp; you make me giddy."

"Trail all the clouds of glory over again! Not yet. I think I want one or two more experiences before that one. I suppose Wordsworth did not believe in reincarnation. Do you, Helen, really?"

I refused to discuss any subject in heaven or on earth until Gyp's legs ceased to dangle over the "Limitless Compass of Eternity," and then we regained our horses and guide, and I admired all the waterfalls: "Bridal Veil," "Widow's Tears"—this latter runs dry sooner than any of the others—Vernal Falls—"Poetry laughing over a Precipice!" Oh, that treasure of a guide-book! and the triple cascade of the waters called after the Valley. I was glad to be again on the "floor" of the valley—my place is among the humble.

That evening we watched as usual for the arrival

of the coach, and laughed over the unfortunates who emerged from their wrappings to find the dust in their very bones.

One tall figure jumped from the box seat. Gyp caught my arm—

"Helen, it is Jim!"

"Jim!—Jim! Nonsense, Gyp—he is in Bangkok."

"But he isn't — I knew he wasn't — but I thought—— Oh, go and speak to him! I — I must make my hair tidy."

It was indeed Jim. When the layers of dust were removed a very-much-alive Jim became visible, and astonishment at last became articulate.

"But, Jim, how did you come? You said you could not possibly do it! How good to see you! But how did Gyp—oh, where is that perfidious little Gyp?"

"Yes, where is she?" cried Jim. "It's all her doing, and now she runs away and leaves me to face the music!"

"Cousin Mary, did you know?" And as Cousin Mary turned to me at the same moment, our questions answered themselves.

Gyp came down, cool as a cucumber, and greeted Jim calmly.

"It is a good thing you have come. I was getting tired of this Sherlock Holmes business. I am no good at a secret."

A very prolonged "Oh!" from her mother and me, followed by, "Why were we to be kept in the dark?"

Jim looked at Gyp with his head on one side, and I thought how very well and how very happy he appeared. He must be glad to be out of the damp heat of Bangkok. The voyage had washed the colour into his face.

"Well, Gyp—what shall we say? You have

engineered the proceedings so far, I don't want to put my foot in it."

"Jim wanted to give you a surprise, that's all." Gyp looked Jim full in the eyes, and her own brown ones never flinched. "He thought he might get away, you know, even as far back as Bangkok; but he thought if he told Helen she would be so disappointed if it fell through, so I was to keep him posted in our movements, and then if he could join us, he would. And so he has. Of course distant relations don't care in the same way as sisters do, or even people who have known you from your cradle—as Mother has done; so I have borne all the vacillations of Jim's hopes and fears for you two. I hope you are grateful!"

I was watching Jim's face; he bit his lips as though mightily amused, and as Gyp wound up he gently clapped his hands.

"Bravo! That's very good, Gyp; very good indeed. I hope they are grateful. They ought to be."

"It is delightful having you here, dear Jim," said Cousin Mary kindly, "and I am glad you have left that hot place, though it is quite hot enough here really. I have ordered tea on the verandah outside my room. Come upstairs. But oh! tell me, how did you know we were here?"

"Gyp left a letter for him at the hotel in San Francisco," I answered.

"Helen!" came in a gasp from Gyp.

"Oh, I have only just thought of it," I said; "but of course you did. Why didn't you tell me, Gyp? You often meant to. No, don't tell me now; 'a lie in time does not *always* save nine'!"

Gyp poured out tea; she kept her eyes down, but at last something flashed out—

"Jim, how about Bangkok?"

Jim's laugh was good and hearty.

"Do you think they have sufficiently recovered *me*, to hear any more?"

"I think you ought to tell Helen *that*," said Gyp gravely.

"Well, then, I have managed—that is to say, my services have called for the recognition—— Help me out, Gyp."

"I don't know it," said Gyp quickly.

"Oh, well, the Company can do with me at home, with an occasional run out to look up matters in the East—which will be jolly, won't it, Gy—Helen?"

No wonder Jim looked happy. I waited for more, but that was all we were told, and Cousin Mary assured me afterwards it was all she expected.

Two figures were walking along the white road of the moonlit valley until past twelve o'clock, and I heard Gyp's door close softly soon after; but she was up early, for we were to leave the Valley shortly, and it was necessary that Jim should also dangle his feet over the "Edge of the Universe and gaze on Eternity."

I was politely asked if I would not come too, but I had sense enough to prefer my bed—these expeditions require an early start. Gyp gave me a little hug on my refusal. Gyp is the most undemonstrative girl I know.

So it came to pass that as I walked in that sunny valley before luncheon, I met two people coming towards me with the sun in their faces.

There was no pretence this time—Gyp held Jim's arm as though it belonged to her, and anyone could have read their story on Jim's face.

"We have 'gazed on Eternity,'" said Gyp.

"Gyp is going to marry me," said Jim.

They had passed through the Golden Gates.

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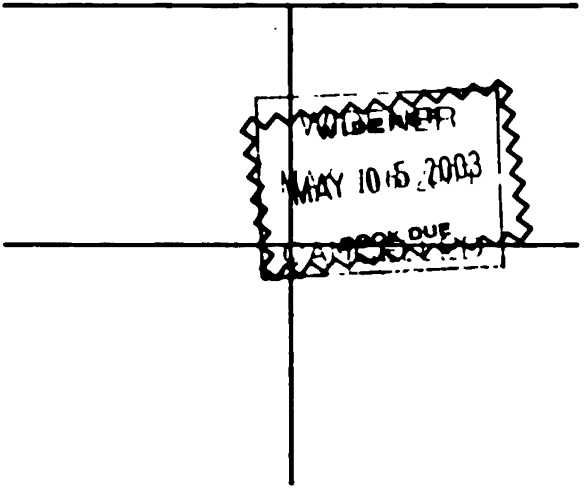

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